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FLORENCE RICHARDSON WYCKOFF

FIFTY YEARS OF GRASSROOTS SOCIAL ACTIVISM

VOLUME I

EARLY YEARS

**Interviewed and Edited by
Randall Jarrell**

**Santa Cruz
1987**



Florence Richardson Wyckoff

Circa 1935

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San Francisco Chronicle 9/22/00

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WYCKOFF, Florence Walton Richardson, died in her sleep in Watsonville, California, on September 20, 2000, two weeks short of her 95th birthday. She was born in Berkeley, California, on October 5, 1905, the daughter of Leon J. Richardson and Maud Wilkinson Richardson. Her birth took place on the grounds of the California Institute for the Deaf and Blind, where her grandfather, Warrington Wilkinson, was the director, the Institute having been founded by her maternal great-grandparents, William Frederick and Anna Estelle Walton. Her father, Leon J. Richardson, was then a professor of classics at the University of California and later served as director of its Extension Division.

She graduated from the University of California in 1926 with a BA in fine arts, traveled and pursued her study of sculpture with Hans Hoffman in Vienna. In 1931 she married Hubert Coke Wyckoff, a lawyer and labor activist, and moved with him to San Francisco, where she became active in politics. While in San Francisco, she was active in the San Francisco Teachers' Union and the National Consumers League for Fair Labor Standards and ran a think tank for the gubernatorial campaign of Cuthbert L. Olson. Governor Olson later appointed her as Director of Community Relations for the California State Relief Administration and she traveled throughout the state investigating living and working conditions of farm laborers.

During the Second World War, she and Hubert Wyckoff moved to Washington, D.C., where he served as a Deputy Administrator in the War Shipping Administration, while she testified before congressional committees to help protect the public health of migrant workers and to include farm laborers under the minimum wage laws. She served on the Board of Directors of the National Consumers League and Friends for Freedom.

Returning to Watsonville, California, after the war, she worked to establish the first citizen's self-help council in Santa Cruz County. Governor Earl Warren appointed her to the Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth and she served on that committee for twenty years. Under four governors, Governor Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown appointed her to the State Board of Public Health. During these years she worked for and was rewarded with passage on the Permanent Health Act, which is still in effect.

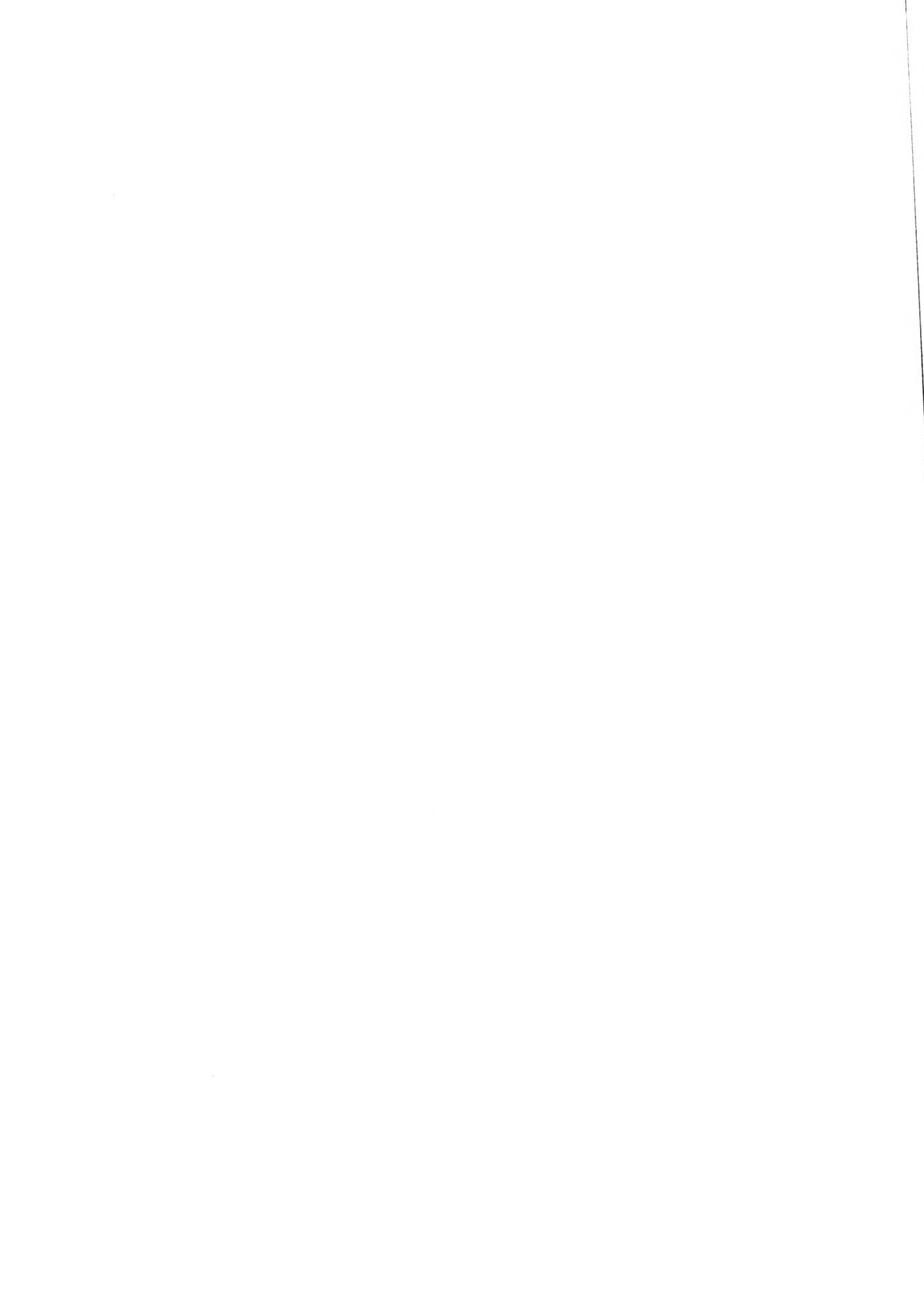
In her later years, she devoted herself to local projects and organizations, including Migration Education in the Americas (MEA), The Friends of the Freedom Library, the Corralitos Valley Community Council, the Coastal Resource Management Project and the Mendocino Agriculture and Land Trust.

Thomasine, born in 1928, traveled to England stamping and a sense of adventure that ranged from camping in the High Sierras to fine arts study in Mexico to travels throughout the world. She had a life with insatiable energy and curiosity, disarming humor, and the will to match her compassion for our country's neglected and exploited people.

She leaves her sister, Jane R. Barnes of North Bennington, Vermont. She was preceded in death by her husband, Hubert Wyckoff, by her beloved children, but survived as mentors and supporters for numerous nephews and nieces, grand-nephews and grand-nieces, and later generations, as well as many other young people.

Memorial services will be scheduled later. Funeral arrangements are being handled by Normans Family Chapel, 2420 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA 95073. The family requests any donations in her memory be sent to Migration Adaptation in the Americas: The Friends of the Freedom Library or the Corralitos Valley Community Council.

The following interview has been received from the Regional History Program of the University Library of the University of California at Santa Cruz, as a part of an exchange between that program and the Regional Oral History Office of the General Library of the University of California at Berkeley. Both offices are engaged in preserving the history of California through tape-recorded interviews with persons who have been prominent in the development of the region.



All uses of this manuscript are covered by an agreement between the Regents of the University of California and Florence Walton Richardson Wyckoff, dated November 8, 1985.

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Following are ERRATA which have been discovered as of December 22, 1987, in *Fifty Years of Grassroots Social Activism*, Volume I:

PAGE	ITEM	CORRECT SPELLING AND/OR NAME
1	Warren, ¶ 3, line 3 & Index, p. 117, ¶ 5, line 9	Warring
31	Mary, ¶ 7, lines 5, 6, 8 & Index, p. 115, ¶ 7, line 3	Betty
50	Noble, ¶ 4, line 27	Nahl
65	Farence, ¶ 6, line 12	Faience
74	Berorang, ¶ 1, line 12	Bärwang
78	Bess, ¶ 3, line 1	Beth
90	Malyas, ¶ 1, line 15, 16; ¶ 3, line 1 & Index, p. 116, ¶ 4, line 3	Matyas

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INTRODUCTION

The Regional History Project has been most fortunate to conduct a series of oral history interviews with longtime Santa Cruz County resident Florence Richardson Wyckoff, and to document her remarkable lifelong work as a social activist, for which she has become nationally recognized as an advocate for migrant families and children. The single-mindedness with which she has pursued grassroots, democratic community-building among migrant families and other dispossessed groups, has informed her many activities on the national, state, and local levels during the last fifty years.

Early Years is the first volume of Florence Richardson Wyckoff: Fifty Years of Grassroots Social Activism, a three-volume oral autobiography derived from twenty-five interview sessions with Mrs. Wyckoff conducted in her home in Corralitos, California, during the 10-year period from February 1, 1976 to May 29, 1985. Prior to our first interview, I had completed extensive research and had compiled a comprehensive chronological outline of Mrs. Wyckoff's myriad activities. I had also spent some time going through her then-unprocessed archive at Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley and had begun to appreciate the scope of her public service work since the 1930s. Little did I realize then that I would still be working with Mrs. Wyckoff a decade later, having made some 30 hours of tape-recordings, spanning her childhood in Berkeley, her political and social coming-of-age during the Depression and the New Deal years, and continuing on into the War on Poverty during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, when she was still working persistently to improve the social and economic condition of migrant families.

Many of the interviews took place in Mrs. Wyckoff's comfortable kitchen, where she spread out on the kitchen table her files of handwritten notes and documents, which she culled from her extensive attic archive prior to each session. She often consulted them as I questioned her. Also memorable are the luncheons she often put together as we talked: salads dressed with her inimitable vinaigrette,

rich chicken soup with tortellini, and homemade tamale pie and enchiladas were some of the delights with which she concluded our working sessions. On chilly winter mornings, we settled into her parlor in front of a crackling fire; on her coffee table she would lay out photographs, theater and concert programs, letters, minutes from meetings, reports, and ephemera related to the morning's interview topics. This comfortable redwood-panelled room houses books collected over a lifetime, and is embellished with landscape paintings, vases of seasonal garden flowers, and one of Mrs. Wyckoff's own small sculptures. The well-worn chairs and sofas, the lustrous antique carpets scattered on the polished floor, and the peaceful view of rolling hills and apple orchards provided a restful setting conducive for leisurely reflection.

In order to refresh her memory, Mrs. Wyckoff read and studied her voluminous files (going back to the 1930s) in preparation for most of the interviews. She often joked that she never threw away a piece of paper, and as I worked my way through her archive I was impressed by her thorough documentation of not only her own activities, but of the many political and social organizations, government bodies, and cultural groups with which she worked whose ephemeral publications, reports, and documents she has saved over the years. These interviews also serve to supplement her personal archive, portions of which she generously gave to the University Library's Special Collections in 1986. The other major portion of her papers is in Bancroft Library.

This first volume of memoirs focusses on Mrs. Wyckoff's family history, her childhood, education, and young adulthood, in Berkeley, California, where she was born in 1905. As the daughter of a prominent University of California classics professor, she was a child of privilege, raised in a progressive and cultivated family. Although her family was not wealthy, and lived for the most part on her father's University salary, and on a small income from rental property, the family had the wherewithal to partake of the rich cultural fare around them and to travel extensively in both this country and Europe during her father's sabbaticals. From early childhood on, she was activated by the pursuit of cultural and intellectual excellence, and was expected to live a life in her family's purposeful tradition.

Both her father and mother (who suffered from lifelong deafness as the result of a childhood illness) were

unusually energetic and imaginative parents and cultural enthusiasts and saw to it (in that pre-television era) that their children took advantage of Bay Area theater, music, and opera. Mrs. Wyckoff's vivid recollections of the concerts and plays she attended and the books she read during her childhood give a vital sense of one family's way of life in the midst of San Francisco Bay Area's lively academic and cultural environment during the first decades of the century, where the emphasis was almost exclusively on European-derived cultural fare.

Wyckoff discusses early family history and the strong influence her grandparents had upon her development. She next describes her father's career at UC Berkeley, and his interest in adult and worker education, which led to the establishment of UC Extension.* She also describes her grandfather's pioneering work at the Institute for the Deaf and Blind, and discusses Berkeley community institutions, activities, and friends important in her family's life.

Wyckoff was educated as an artist at the University of California, Berkeley. After graduating in 1926, she attended the California School of Fine Arts where she immersed herself in woodcarving, sculpting, landscape design, and ceramics. She travelled extensively in Europe and Mexico during 1925-1930. When she returned to San Francisco in 1931 she married then-U.S. deputy attorney Hubert C. Wyckoff, Jr. The concluding chapters in Early Years chronicle her political and social coming-of-age in depression era San Francisco, where she became aware of the pressing issues of the day -- breadlines, poverty, and unemployment, and began the process of "breaking through [her] Victorian eggshell," as she characterized her self-education as a citizen, and her growing awareness of the darker side of California's social and economic life which had previously escaped her attention.

Her activist education began in the 1930s with her involvement in the San Francisco Theater Union, with the YWCA's Industrial Department, and with labor and workers' education and the Pacific Coast Labor School. The volume concludes with her commentary on her first visits to the Farm Security Administration's California migrant labor

*Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office published the oral history memoirs of Professor Richardson in 1962: Leon J. Richardson: Berkeley Culture, University of California Highlights, and University Extension, 1892-1960.

camps, where she found the social cause which would engage her energies for the next fifty years.

The manuscript was edited by the interviewer and returned to Mrs. Wyckoff for additions and corrections. Mrs. Wyckoff checked the manuscript very carefully and made a number of small changes and corrections. She also kindly loaned us the frontispiece portrait photograph for this volume.

Copies of this manuscript are on deposit in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; and in Special Collections of the University Library at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This manuscript is part of a collection of interviews on the history of California agricultural and labor history, which have been conducted by the Regional History Project. The Project is under the administrative supervision of Allan J. Dyson, University Librarian.

Randall Jarrell

June 15, 1987
Regional History Project
University Library
University of California, Santa Cruz

EARLY YEARS, 1905-1930

Jarrell: Today is February 17th and we are at the home of Florence Wyckoff in Corralitos. To start off, would you give your full name?

Wyckoff: Certainly. My name is Florence Walton Richardson Wyckoff. I was named after my grandmother, Florence Walton. I thought we might start out this interview session by looking at the grandparents, since they do have a profound influence on you as you grow up, particularly if you are very close to them. I have the feeling that forbears have a great influence as role models. When they're seen first hand and interact with a child, they have the most influence. But even as myths interpreted by parents, they exercise an important influence.

Early Family Influences

Wyckoff: I had one grandmother who was a myth; she died before I was born. The closest grandparent was my maternal grandfather, Warren Wilkinson, whom I knew as Wya. That was his nickname. I named him that. He was director of the Institute for the Deaf and Blind for 44 years from 1865 to 1909. I was born in his home, an old victorian mansion [called] Banksia Lodge, the principal's house on the grounds of the institution. He taught me to read by the age of four. He took me on trips across the Bay and all around San Francisco with him. We went every week to the Panama Pacific Exposition during its year. We went to the California Market and ate Olympia oysters; rode on the horsecars; we saw Lincoln Beachy fly; we saw the Tower of Jewels. He taught me to explore.

He wore a silk top hat and carried a gold-top cane. He also wore a cutaway with pinstriped pants. We were good companions. Mother stayed at home with Jane and John, my brother and sister. "Wya" was born in Charlton, New York, in 1834. He was a direct descendent of Richard Warren of the Mayflower, but I never found that out until I was 70 years old. He took me to my sittings for my portrait by Mary Curtis Richardson. She was no relation. We went to the top of Russian Hill, right across from the Willis Polk house at 1019 Vallejo Street where I lived later when I was first

married. Grandfather moved with us to 2415 College Avenue [in Berkeley] from his victorian house when he retired from the Institution in 1910. Unfortunately, his mind began to fail in the last two years, but we always kept him at home with us, and he died there about 1918.

He had a remarkable circle of friends among the early Gold Rush pioneers. He got money from them to help rebuild the Institution for the Blind and Deaf after it was completely destroyed by fire in 1875. Forty men each gave \$1,000 to put up a temporary building to reopen the school.

He knew Ralston and Fair and Moss and many of the great men who made money in the Gold Rush and in building railroads and doing the great early development of California. He also carried on a remarkable correspondence with Josiah Royce and William James searching for signs of intelligence in deaf, mute, and blind children. They were searching in the direction of what happened to Helen Keller. He also toured all the similar institutions in Europe seeking solutions to problems of institutional life.

In those days, such institutions were notoriously dreadful places because people had not understood the public health problems involved. There were great epidemics of typhoid and many children died in the institutions. They did not realize that it was due to bad plumbing, cross-connections in water pipes, and various things that were really mechanically very simple. But no one knew what these problems were and Grandfather Wilkinson regarded himself as a sort of detective; he'd go around and try to find out what caused these problems.

Paternal Grandmother

Then there was "Little Grandma," my father's mother. She was very tiny. She wore a size one shoe. Her name was Isabel Jane Chamberlain Richardson. She was the epitome of old New England in our household. She was one of 12 children, brought up on a hard rock, New Hampshire farm, a real subsistence farm. She saved everything in case it might come in handy. I inherited that trait. That's why this house is such a museum.

I never throw away a paper. That's why I'm able to dig up all this material for you. I know the family takes advantage of my weakness and stores all their stuff with me. Well, "Little Grandma" made dozens of beautiful patchwork quilts. My father and his sister actually made a patchwork quilt during the long New England winters around the fireplace. Those New England winters are deadly cold and little children have to stay indoors, and do what they can do. So the parents put them to work because everyone believed in the work ethic, very definitely.

Grandmother wrote poetry. She belonged to the Violet Crown Society, which was a poetry circle. She had a profound influence over my father in a very gentle way. She encouraged him to go on with his studies, leaving his father's business in dry goods much to his father's disappointment. His father was the Mayor of Jackson, Michigan. My father went on to the University of Michigan; he was really the first scholar in the family. There was not a long line of scholars; the family came from such very hard rock New England living on stony subsistence farms, that there was no time for scholarship or anything. Father was the principal of a high school in Michigan. He came to the University of California at the invitation of Charles Mills Gayley (who was his friend at the University of Michigan) because there was an opening in the Latin department although my father was a Greek and philosophy major.

Father

Father came here to California as a very low paid teacher. This was quite a decision for a young man to make in those days.

Jarrell: So they left New England?

Wyckoff: Yes. They moved.

Jarrell: They left when he was a boy?

Wyckoff: Yes. Father was born in Keene, New Hampshire. The eleven other Chamberlain brothers and sisters in the family always wanted to come and visit, but Grandfather Richardson didn't like so many visitors so he moved out West to get away from the relatives. He moved to Jackson, Michigan where he became mayor. Grandmother's letters show that she backed my father up in the decision to go into education.

She was tiny, feminine, humorous, dry and spoke the New Hampshire vernacular. She died with us at her side at our home at 2415 College about 1923. All the grandparents died at home with us around them.

Grandfather Josiah Crosby Richardson, that's Grandmother Isabel's husband, moved to Berkeley with her, and they lived in a house near us. We prepared an apartment on Piedmont Avenue, painting it ourselves, and J.C. died 6 weeks after arriving. I never was close to him. He was an ardent Mason and a passionate genealogist and my father followed that bent and carried it to enormous lengths. This was a great New England propensity. Everybody in New England still is curious to know who your ancestors were, where you came from and everything about you. I do it myself as the result of

the mammoth amount of material that has been left to us. It becomes an interesting detective story kind of thing if you like to do that. I like it better than knitting.

Grandfather Richardson was a diary writer. We have his diaries beginning at the time of the death of his mother when he was eight years old. This is way back, a very long time ago about 1844. Josiah Crosby Richardson was an only child. His mother died and his father remarried and moved down south, and the child went alone, was turned over to an old uncle and aunt to be raised. Young Josiah Crosby visited the south before the Civil War and his diaries reveal his surprise at the difference in culture between New England and the south and his shock at slavery, and the riverboat life in Missouri. He was a very strong anti-slavery advocate. His diaries are very interesting.

Jarrell: Where are these diaries?

Wyckoff: They're here in the barn. Actually, his diaries are so pedestrian that I don't think anybody would want to read them. There are a 150 years of weather reports in our family diaries because all the men always wrote in their diaries "clear and sunny today." You got this incredible weather report. So if the weather bureau wants those diaries, they can have them.

Maternal Grandmother

Then there was my grandmother, Florence Walton Wilkinson. She was my mother's mother. She died before I was born and I never would have been born if she had lived. She violently objected to my mother having any children. My mother had scarlet fever when she was about eight and lost her hearing; both her eardrums burst and just never rebuilt and the result was that she was deaf from then on. She was an only child and her mother became the kind of overprotective parent that a crippled child would have. Their relationship was extremely close and I think that Grandma Wilkinson tried to prevent Mother from getting married. She certainly tried to prevent her from having any children. This was because she regarded Mother as an invalid. Yet they kept telling me that I took after Grandmother Florence Walton which was a hard role to play.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: It was a dead hand laid on me. I was named after her and constantly told how much I was like her. Of course Mother adored grandmother, and being a deaf child, she was deeply dependent on her. It was a miracle that my mother ever cut loose and got married.

I was told all grandmother's good points by Mother. But I had a wonderful old grand uncle, Guy Wilkinson, who knew her well and said, "Florence Walton was a wild one. She broke all the victorian rules of behavior for proper young ladies. She started in the first grade at the little red schoolhouse in San Francisco in 1851, she played hooky and nobody could find her till they went to Portsmouth Square where she was standing in front of the gallows watching a hanging."

Jarrell: This was your maternal grandmother?

Wyckoff: This was Grandmother Florence Walton, the one I'm supposed to resemble. Her father was a forty-niner in the Gold Rush. He made a fortune, and built a house in San Francisco called Walton's Folly on the corner of Washington and Taylor Streets. I have pictures of it. It had 12 bedrooms, I think. It had a tower so he could climb up and look out and see the sailing ships come in. Of course it burned up in the fire [1906] along with most of the City. So he lost his house and lost his fortune because gold was easy come, easy go, in those days.

Grandmother was living either high, wide, and handsome, or down in the depths. There was never anything very secure about their lives. Actually I think when she got to be an adolescent they decided that life in San Francisco was much too rough for her and that she was too hard to control so they put her in Dominican Convent over in San Rafael, even though she wasn't a Catholic. That was the one place where they felt somebody would watch over her. She must have been a handful.

They do tell terribly funny stories about her going back East to New England to visit her grandparents in Pepperell, Massachusetts, who were still living in the old New England tradition. Grandmother, having been raised in San Francisco in the Gold Rush days, was of course very different and she went into her grandmother's old New England farm house and she said, "Where's the piano?" And they said, "Well, we don't have a piano." And she said, "Well, I can't live in a house without a piano. Where's the horse and buggy?" And they said, "Out in the barn." So she got the horse and the buggy going, and drove into town. She rented a piano and brought it out and put it in the house.

They tell other stories about her, one of which was that she went down into the root cellar where there was always a barrel of good apples and a barrel of what they call speckled apples. Speckled apples were the apples that were starting to spoil. Grandmother came up from the cellar with a nice good apple in her hand and started to eat it. Her grandmother looked at her and said, "You didn't eat one of the speckled apples?" "Why," she said, "no. Why should I eat a speckled apple?" "Well," her grandmother said, "We

always eat up the specked apples before we eat the good apples." And Grandmother Florence said, "Well, in that case, by the time you get through with the specked apples, all the good apples will be specked!" So that was her philosophy.

I know they tell other stories about how she went into her grandmother's living room and all the blinds were drawn and there were newspapers spread on the carpet. And she said, "What's the matter in this room? What's happening?" "Well, they said, "We always spread newspapers on the carpet to keep the sun from fading the roses." (Laughter) "Well," grandmother said, "I don't like this." So she put up all the window shades, opened all the curtains, and took up all the papers. So Grandmother Florence was a handful.

She actually went back to try to enter grand opera in New York at one time. But I don't know what happened because she seemed to have visited all the relatives and then come home and then married Warren Wilkinson. So that certainly put an end to her career with opera. She was a good singer and a great lover of music and a good musician and sang in the church choirs in San Francisco.

So those are the antecedents. Now I don't know just where you want me to go from here.

Mother

Jarrell: Well, I hadn't realized that your mother was deaf
...

Wyckoff: Yes, Yes.

Jarrell: Now that must have posed some problems?

Wyckoff: Well, it certainly did. Mother was a very accomplished lip-reader. She could see my father way across a room making a hand-sign of crossed fingers which meant "Who am I talking to?" and she would come up and say, "Mrs. Jones, how nice to see you," so he would know that was who he was talking to. That was all, he would cross his fingers and she would know he was in trouble.

We, as children, were very naughty of course; we were very normal children. And we learned that by talking out of one side of our mouth, we could prevent Mother from reading our lips. You held your mouth perfectly straight on one side and then you knew she couldn't make out what you were saying.

Jarrell: So she had already learned to talk when she had the scarlet fever?

Wyckoff: Oh yes. She was about eight years old about then. So she spoke. She spoke in a normal voice, too.

They took her to Vienna for a remarkable operation sometime about 1888. One of the very first skin graft operations was done to rebuild her eardrum with a piece of skin from her thigh. They took the skin off her thigh and put it in her ear. It did rebuild the drum, but it became a piece of scar tissue which does not normally breathe the way skin does. It peels and sheds. The result was that this piece of skin that formed the new eardrum had to be cleaned off about once every three or four months. It was an extremely painful and delicate operation because the drum is right near the brain and the nerves are very sensitive. Mother had to go, wherever she was all over the world (we traveled a great deal), to an aurist and have this done. I would go with her. I saw the agony she went through. It was really cruel. Some of the aurists were clumsy and rough with her. Others were very gentle. Most of the time they were not gentle. She just dreaded going.

Jarrell: Did it actually allow her to hear?

Wyckoff: It allowed her to hear a little. They had no hearing aids in those days. Finally when they got hearing aids, she had what was called a bone conduction hearing aid which went behind her ear onto the mastoid bone, and that enabled her to hear more.

Mother was a great lover of music. She played the piano. She really enjoyed music. To her music was something that she desperately wanted to give us. This was one reason why my parents planned all these incredible trips during their sabbaticals. They just gave their sabbatical years to us instead of using them for themselves. My father was a very generous man, when I think of what he did.

My mother's deafness may have contributed to a wonderful experience for all of us. Nearly every night when we weren't entertaining or going to concerts, we would gather around the big fireplace on the hearth rug or on pillows and listen to my mother read aloud. She read all of Charles Dickens, all of Sir Walter Scott, Robert L. Stevenson, Edgar Allan Poe, Hawthorne, Shakespeare, Gayley's Classic Myths, Joel Harris' Uncle Remus, Mark Twain, and many other books, plays, poems and novels. She started when we were very young with the children's books such as The Wind in the Willows and Beatrix Potter. I think this experience helped to form our language and scale of values.

Our parents made a heroic effort to give us every musical opportunity. Theater and ballet and art were included later when we went to New York. Looking back over the list of concerts we attended, I realize now what a rich experience

we had even before going to New York. We were certainly well-prepared and ready for that experience. There were the usual classic plays for children starting with Maeterlinks Bluebird and Berry's Peter Pan with Maude Adams. Then there were Gilbert and Sullivan operas, Robin Hood and in 1917 our first grand opera in French. This opera was for the benefit of the Allies; it was Cavaliera Rusticana. Then we heard the whole Richard Wagner series of the San Francisco Symphony concerts conducted by Alfred Hertz, old Papa Hertz. He was the most wonderful old man. I wish you could have seen him. He had a game leg; it crumpled all the time; and he had enormous shoulders. He was stricken with infantile paralysis when he was young. His legs were sort of withered. But he was a giant of a man and he had a barricade of sorts around him when he conducted so that he could grab hold of something when he started to fall. We all were just fascinated by him. He was a typical old German musician.

We also went to all the Berkeley Musical Association concerts. The list of people who played there was incredible. My first great singer was Johanna Gadski. I don't know if you remember the Wagnerian singers, what magnificent creatures they were: Maude Powell, Percy Granger, Elena Gherhart, Louis Graevure, Eugene Ysays, Leopold Godowski, Rheinold Werrenrach, the Minneapolis Symphony, Freda Hempel.

I will never forget 1918 when I saw Robert Mantell in King Lear, my first real Shakespeare. On July 21, 1918, we saw Sarah Bernhart at the Oakland Orpheum Theater in De Theatre au Champ d'honneur -- that means "From the Theater to the Field of Honor. She played the part of a wounded amputee soldier. She had lost a leg herself and was a very old but great lady. Her spirit just dominated the whole audience. 1918 was the year I first heard Pablo Casals in the Harmon Gymnasium where all the great concerts were held. Now there is nothing to replace the Harmon Gymnasium. The whole Berkeley Musical Association and all those concerts died when they tore down Harmon Gym. It was such a stupid move. The acoustics at Harmon were good and the size was just right for the Berkeley audience. Unfortunately, there was no real stage. It had to be built up. It was always a very flimsy kind of little platform put up in the center. In spite of this drawback, the San Francisco Symphony played there often. In 1919, we had Aida and Miriam, Sister of Moses in the Greek Theater. Maeterlink's The Immortality of the Soul was given in the form of a lecture. These were all productions of Sam Hume. In 1920, '21, the year before we went to New York, the Berkeley Musical Association gave us Alfred Cortot, a marvelous French pianist.

Jarrell: Oh!

Wyckoff: The Flonzaley Quartet, Margaret Matzenauer, Heifitz, Emilio de Gogorza, a basso profundo, oh ... we couldn't ever keep from laughing during that man's singing. It seemed so funny to us children.

We had some great plays. David Warfield in The Auctioneer, Margaret Anglin in Joan of Arc, Booth Tarkington in Talents, Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest. We also had some good Shakespeare. Sam Hume put on A Winter's Tale and Henry IV. We saw the grand operas Il Trovatore, Madame Butterfly and lots of Gilbert and Sullivan. On February 28, 1921, we saw, for the first time, a Shaw play in Berkeley, Pygmalion. Oh, it wasn't in Berkeley, it was in San Francisco at something called the Maitland Playhouse. It was located at Stockton above Post so it's been demolished. I have no memory of that theater, but I do remember Pygmalion. It was a marvelous show.

Family Life in Berkeley

Jarrell: Let's go back to when you were born and the time you lived at the Institution.

Wyckoff: I lived at the Institution till I was five years old. My grandfather retired and the family moved to a house that my father had built at the time he was first married. They had rented this house to Henry Morse Stephens because my mother and father would not leave my grandfather alone. His wife, Florence, had died. So my parents stayed on in the old victorian mansion to take care of him. When grandfather retired, they moved to 2415 College Avenue which is, as you know, about two blocks from the University.

My father and I -- we all walked to the University. It was a very handy place to be. Berkeley was just hayfields in those days, with cows staked out here and there. It was a lovely town. It was full of wild flowers in the spring and was a wonderful place.

I had a governess when I was very young, a Miss Faville. She was a remarkable woman. She was almost blind -- could barely find her way; she had to wear very thick glasses. All the children of the neighborhood would come and spend the afternoon and we would play games in French. Mother believed that children easily learned a foreign language if they spoke it when they were very young. Of course we didn't read it or write it, but we played games and sang songs and used this French as a ... well, it was the afternoon of fun in French. I think it was a great way to teach. I strongly suspect John Dewey had something to do with guiding Mother's educational efforts. I never did ask her about that.

Then I was put in a Montessori school for a little while. There was a Montessori school halfway down on Haste Street somewhere in a little cottage behind a house. It was a nice school. I enjoyed it. Montessori schools are pretty exciting places for little children. Then I had to enter Emerson School which was the grammar school, the local primary school in Berkeley. I had to walk to school and cross a lot of vacant lots full of cows and scary things.

Of course I had the advantage of having had a grandfather who taught me how to read and write before I even got to school because he was afraid you might get deaf or blind early in life, and it was so much more difficult to teach a child then. So when we started school at age six, we could read and write pretty well. School was, as a result, a little bit boring at first. I had to wait for the others to get into the same level. But the teachers were smart. They piled on things to make me work. I would always get a lot more arithmetic, which I hated at the time. And things like that to keep me going. I became a book addict. I read, and read until I practically lost my eyesight. By the time I was eleven I had to wear glasses because I had read every book in the library at the school and was hard at work on the Berkeley Public Library. The parents tried to keep me from reading because they knew I was not helping my eyesight. I became nearsighted as a result of all the reading. Nowadays they say they're not sure whether you're nearsighted first and then become a book addict or whether being a book addict makes you nearsighted.

Childhood Trips and Outings

Wyckoff: Some of the lovely parts of my early childhood were the trips to the mountains that we made. I marked a map to show you, in case you want to see where we went. In the very early days we went on the train and took camping equipment and made a base camp. This was when the children were very little. We camped like this at Bear Valley and Squaw Valley. Later, however, we got a Model T Ford, which was a great thing. We would put things on the Model T and take it as far as the end of the road which would either be a pack station or a cattle ranch where they had pack animals. Then we would pack into an area which we would explore. We explored Medicine Lake up near the Oregon border which was a volcano with a lake in the crater. Of course there wasn't a soul living in these areas. There may have been a forest ranger around, because most of the places we went to were in National Forest areas. Then we explored the Mount Lassen area and stayed at a base camp at Juniper Lake and explored all of that. And of course we did a lot of fishing.

Summer vacations were very long. They were three months, because my father had a whole summer. Sometimes he worked

but most of the time he didn't. We tried the very high mountains with pack animals. Father didn't believe in going into the mountains with a lot of equipment. We never had a tent; we never had any protection from the rain; we always learned how to protect ourselves. A roll of canvas would be the most we'd have. We were lucky. Father was a very clever mountaineer. He had been taught by John Muir. As a young man my father used to march from Berkeley to the top of Mt. Whitney and back as a summer outing. He'd cross the entire valley going on foot. He felt that was the way you saw things that really counted. He was a really excited explorer of California when he came here as a young man, learning the ways of camping outdoors, learning how to cook ... learning how to manage to live off the land was very enjoyable.

He really was very clever. We took very little with us on these outings. A sack of beans and maybe a side of bacon and sacks of prunes and flour or something like that would be all we carried. Then we'd just forage, catch trout, etc.

Jarrell: Was your mother good at this?

Wyckoff: Yes, Mother was very good. Except that eventually her heart was damaged. The high altitude bothered her. So she gave up the last few years and didn't go with us.

We learned a lot from Professor Willis L. Jepson who was a botany professor at the University. He was a marvelous man. He wrote The Trees of California. It's the horticultural book on trees. He would take us on walks on the hills and would describe and show us the things that we could eat and the things that we must not touch. He showed us all the various things that Indians used to eat. So we learned a lot from Willis Jepson. It was always great fun to go with him on the hills because he would explain so many different things to us.

Jarrell: These would be the hills around Berkeley?

Wyckoff: Around Berkeley, yes. Willis never went on a mountain trip with us. We did occasionally have some families that would go with us on these excursions. My father didn't believe in going on group walks with the Sierra Club and that sort of thing. He thought that was dreadful. You lost the sense of being alone in the mountains which he thought was such a wonderful feeling. And it is, there's no doubt about it. Father thought that you ought to be up there meditating on your life and what it was worth, and how you were doing. He didn't feel that you should be interrupted with a lot of chatter going on.
(Laughter)

Jarrell: So he had his own sort of aesthetic feeling for the wilderness?

Wyckoff: Yes he did, very definitely. We would only go with families that shared this feeling. Usually we would only go with families and make a base camp and then we would go our own way from there. We went one year when we were quite young to Squaw Valley with the Strattons and the Percival Lewis families. George Stratton was a psychology professor and he and his wife and three children came and pitched camp next to us in Squaw Valley. Squaw Valley was nothing but a cattle ranch owned by the Scotts and had only one little ranch house on it.

Jarrell: That was your base camp?

Wyckoff: Yes, that was our base camp. From there we wandered off into the mountains.

We had some fabulous experiences in the Sierra. I'll never forget one night we were asleep. There was a bright, full moon and we slept out on the grass on the edge of a stream. All of a sudden I woke up and it looked to me as though there was a camel walking around in the camp. It was a four-legged beast with a great hump on its back. I thought "great scott! What in the world is this thing?" I was scared. I got up and ran over to my father and woke him up. He got up and got the flashlight and we went over and saw that it was a horse with a man tied on its back. The man seemed dead. We were very much disturbed about this.

Well, Dad took the man off the horse and found a tourniquet round his arm. This man it turned out was a Basque sheepherder. His name was Joe Urruburru and Joe had cut the artery on his wrist while trying to shoe his horse. The artery was spurting so he put the tourniquet on. He knew that he would never be able to hold it himself so he fastened it absolutely tight and then he tied himself on the horse. The horse had brains enough to come on down through the trail to our camp. The grazing was very good in our meadow and he just came right over to our camp. Of course Dad went charging into Truckee and got a doctor and brought him out to our camp. Well, to make a long story short, we had Joe in our camp for about a week while he was recuperating.

Joe had a flock of about 5000 sheep up in the mountains, in the meadows, up above. We met him first when he drove the 5000 sheep through our camp, not expecting to meet us again. Sheepherders brought their sheep down to Truckee or Reno in the winter and then they took them up in the high mountains in the summer. We knew that there were shepherds up there, sheepherders they call them. So Joe stayed with us for a week and he was a fascinating experience for all of us. He

spoke enough English so that we could communicate with him. It seems that Joe was one of a family of, I think it was eighteen children in which there were four pairs of twins; born in the Pyrenees to a Basque sheepherder. At the age of fourteen, the family kicked him out of his home to earn his living. He had to go and do something. Basque sheepherders were in demand in this country, so they shipped him to this country and he came in and became a sheepherder here.

He described his life at home in Spain which was fascinating to us. He said every time that the family had a new baby, they bought a pair of goats to support that child. The goats supplied milk and cheese, the protein of the diet. The rest of the children's food was grown in this graveled, dry country.

Well, Joe was full of wonderful stories and we just enjoyed him so. We asked him, "How come you're not afraid of leaving your sheep up there?" "Oh," he said, "I have no problem at all; the dogs take care of the sheep."

Jarrell: Yes, they have wonderful dogs.

Wyckoff: "They just circle and circle and circle and keep them together." He said, "As long as they're together there's nothing wrong. They'll be all right." Well, we were just amazed. Joe invited us up to a banquet at his camp up above. He was going to prepare this great banquet for us which consisted of a boiled sheep's head that I'll never forget. Anyway, his dog took one look at Mother and ran screaming into the woods. Joe laughed and thought it was terribly funny because the dog it seems had never seen a woman in a skirt and Mother wore a skirt. It was a divided skirt.

Jarrell: Culottes.

Wyckoff: Yes. That's right. The dog had never seen anything like them. Well, Joe came down to visit us in Berkeley and went to the Panama Pacific Exposition. He stayed with us while he visited. Of course going to that exposition was the high point of his whole life.

Education

Jarrell: What was school life like when you were a child?

Wyckoff: I had been, you see, to the Montessori School. I went through Emerson without too much difficulty.

Jarrell: Until what age?

Wyckoff: Well, I went through the whole thing. I did run away and play hooky quite a bit. I got terrible spankings

for doing so. In fact, one time I was locked in the attic for two days on bread and water for playing hooky. I played hooky because I didn't like my mathematics teacher. I remember that. You see, I'd been taught to walk on the hills as a child with my parents and with Professor Jepson and with friends. They became such a wonderful attraction, those hills. I always wanted to run away and go up on them cause that was where everything was so marvelous and we'd been taught to love the great outdoors. So I would run away and just spend the day up in the grass in the hills enjoying life. When I went home, I didn't say that I hadn't been at school at all that day. Finally, of course, it got back home that I had been playing hooky. I was given the disciplining and locked in the attic. Of course, there was nothing to do in the attic. There's nothing worse than putting a child in a room with nothing to do. I discovered an old gun in the attic, a double-barrelled, eight-gauge shotgun. I discovered that it belonged to my grandfather and it had a contrivance for making shells. So I carefully read all the instructions and made two gigantic shells for this thing. Finally, when I got out of the attic, I went downstairs with this shotgun. The instructions said you should shoot a shotgun in order to see what the pattern of the bullets would be. So I put a piece of paper up against the shed wall -- we had an outdoor toolshed of sorts -- then I held this big gun up and I pulled both the triggers.

Jarrell: My God!

Wyckoff: It sat me down about ten feet back and about five feet deep into a blackberry bush. I couldn't get out. I was stuck with thorns from one side to the other. My brother had to come with a pruning hook and cut me out. I had bandaids all over me after that episode. So I decided that playing hooky was not exactly the best thing in the world.

I think Mother thought that she'd better move me to some kind of a school where life was a little more interesting to me. So I was put in Miss Randolph's school. Miss Randolph's school was a very small school with small classes and lots of individual attention. I enjoyed that school very much. The building is still there on the corner of Derby and Bellevue. It's right near the present Warren Olney Home. A lot of my friends went to Miss Randolph's School. Here is a little recital given by the girls and boys who went there. Doris Peterson and Ruth Peterson who were the children of Tonsten Peterson were in this little concert that was given there.

Well that lasted a little while, and then they put me in the Frances Williard School. There I had a very vigorous experience and began to get the feeling of being in a bigger institution. Curiously enough, I really got to like my

mathematics teachers there and got really interested. They taught a certain amount of science. I was always very interested in physics and chemistry and that sort of thing, so I enjoyed that quite a bit.

We also had a music teacher who was one of the funniest women, Miss Ellerhorst. She called all the boys "Man."

Jarrell: (Laughter)

Wyckoff: Due to the fact that my mother was so deaf, I had to shout to make her hear me. It had split my vocal cords and they grew back thick. I could only sing a high baritone. It was just like a little newsboy's voice. I did permanent damage to my vocal chords because of that. So my voice was quite a bit lower as a child than anybody else's voice. Miss Ellerhorst always had me singing with the boys and this was a little difficult. I didn't mind. I sort of thought it was fun.

Well, after Frances Williard, Mother and Father decided to send me to University High which was a teaching high school. I went down there and I only lasted a few months. I wrote a pathetic letter to my mother and shoved it under her door. I remember I couldn't tell her the whole thing. It was just too awful. I had to write it down and get it straight and explain why I did not want to go to University High anymore. Primarily it was due to the fact that the teachers were teacher trainees. The master teacher did not spend much time in the class, especially with us, I guess, who were beginners or freshmen. Some of the students were from the very tough areas of Oakland and it drew from all over Berkeley and Oakland. These kids were utterly merciless on these teacher trainees. They'd frequently drive them to tears, and just pester them and give them a hard time. The trainees lost control of the class. The classes were rather large too. Well, I couldn't stand either the sniveling teachers or the tough roughnecks. I just felt that the whole place was a shambles; that I just wasn't getting anywhere and that the whole thing was bad and I wanted to get out. Well, Mother read the letter very carefully and had a consultation, I guess, with Dad, and they decided to pull me out and try me in A to Zed School which was a small private school. This was done partly due to the fact that my father's sabbatical year cycles came up every seventh year. In two more years he would have a full-year sabbatical.

Dad had a wonderful plan for us. He wanted to go to New York and give the children the experience of living in a big city and knowing what all the cultural advantages of the biggest city in America were. He wanted to take us out of school and have us just be free to do the kinds of things that you can do to enjoy the incredible cultural advantages

of New York City. So I was told if I could speed through high school and graduate, in two years I could go with them to New York for Dad's sabbatical year. Otherwise, I'd have to go to school back East. Well, I thought this was a great, great inducement.

Jarrell: You were a freshman at the time?

Wyckoff: Well, I had two more years to go.

Jarrell: I see.

Wyckoff: So at A to Zed School you could double up and do work as fast as you were capable of doing. So I had no extracurricular activities. The school didn't have any school spirit; they had no competition, they had no sports. They had no clubs or any social life whatever. They had a graduation party, but that was it. They had nothing except work. Students were always hard at work; studying very intensively in small classes of about six. Most of the teachers were professors from the University and were very high-quality teachers. They wouldn't teach unless they enjoyed their work. They also seemed to enjoy being with us in a sense. The whole attitude of the teachers toward the class was totally different from that pathetic fear that was in the teacher trainees at University High. It was just a complete metamorphosis. I couldn't believe that they were both teachers. Well, it was a very exciting two years and I studied terribly hard. I remember studying till midnight many nights of the week. Homework was an enormous assignment. On the other hand, I belonged to the Berkeley Tennis Club. And I played tennis nearly every day. But it was up to me to play with whom I wanted and when I wanted.

Social Activities

Jarrell: You planned your time at that age?

Wyckoff: I could do that. I would play tennis because you can't sit in a chair and study all day long. So I managed to do that. I also managed once in a while to go riding in the hills. I loved to ride. I didn't have a horse, but I belonged to a group of friends who did have horses, and they would let me ride some of them. There were a lot of stables in Berkeley and occasionally I'd rent a horse and ride. But I never owned a horse. I rented one horse in one stable all the time so that I got to know that horse. I enjoyed riding very much. So I had time to do that as well.

Mother believed in a social life in which you did everything in the home. For example, in the high school period, even before that actually, there was a group of about 30 families whose children had Saturday night parties in somebody's home. We would have dances and games and all kinds of nice

activities, birthday parties, and whatever was in order; Halloween parties, Thanksgiving parties, all different kinds of parties. There was a great deal of social life in the homes of these 30 families.

You never went to a public place. We all did go to dancing school. We were hit over the head to do that. Everybody hated it, but we all went to dancing school and learned how to dance. Then the dances were given. We had live music, if you please, in our homes. None of this Victrola business. Now that was fun. We enjoyed that very much.

Jarrell: Who provided the music?

Wyckoff: Well it may have been kids a little older than we, or it may have been professional people who were willing to do this kind of thing. Anyway, we had plenty of musicians around town who were willing to play. They were paid, that was part of the arrangement. They got something for it, usually. Oh once in a while some of the parents would play. When we were younger, it was usually just the parents who played. But this way we made a wide circle of friends. The business of having a crush on one boy got diluted very easily because you were always being asked to dance by different boys. I remember looking at my dance cards with many different names on them. The next generation seemed to have the same names up and down the whole dance card.

Jarrell: Right.

Wyckoff: You weren't allowed to dance with just one person. We had to move around and mix. To be sure, we had boyfriends who were closer than others that we liked especially. But there wasn't this business of being stuck, with one guy forever, which got so boring as I found out a little later. Anyway that was a nice period and I think it had a very healthy effect on my later life. It helped you make a broad circle of friends and kept you from getting too narrow. Those little groups did things together. For example there were, in the very early days of Berkeley, a lot of dramas. My mother and father have said that they put on dramas in their home. They did a great deal of that kind of thing because it was hard to get to San Francisco and you didn't get over there very often. You entertained yourself by actually putting on a whole Shakespeare play, that sort of thing, in the homes.

Jarrell: That's interesting.

Wyckoff: Well, we didn't do that, but we did have places where we would. There was the Berkeley Piano Club for example. It was located in a nice little tiny building that's still standing. A group of ladies still put on weekly musicales, concerts, and plays. Now that was a great

place. We did put on quite a few shows there, the young people did.

Berkeley Cultural Activities

Jarrell: What about the Berkeley Music Association?

Wyckoff: Yes. The Berkeley Musical Association. My father was the guiding light for that Association for a long, long time.

Jarrell: But didn't this organization put on little shows?

Wyckoff: No. They used Harmon Gymnasium or wherever they could get the proper acoustics for a concert. There's no question about it. They brought the most remarkable group of artists there. I have all the old programs for the Berkeley Musical Association which I'd be glad eventually to turn over to the University if they want them. We really had a sampling of wonderful things going on. There was the Berkeley Piano Club, the Berkeley Musical Association, the Town and Gown Club. I'm trying to think of some of the others -- yes, there were also the Glee Clubs. There was also the California Music League, that was another one. There was the San Francisco Opera Association and the San Francisco Symphony Association. Mother and Father believed that as part of our education we should attend absolutely everything of this sort that we could possibly work in. It was given a great priority in our lives. I realize now that they never hesitated to spend money on that kind of thing for us, which was really very nice. It must have been expensive.

Family Finances

Wyckoff: People had very small salaries in those days, appallingly small. The professors were particularly low-paid. Mother, luckily, inherited a little bit of money from Grandfather Wilkinson who, during the early days, had bought some property in San Francisco. He bought an old hotel, or I guess he built it. It was on the corner of Polk and Clay. It was a small, modest kind of structure, but it brought in a steady income. It had a little store downstairs and a little hotel upstairs. Nowadays it's the kind of place where welfare recipients live upstairs and there's a little restaurant downstairs. It was always a very good little investment in the sense of income. We don't own it anymore, but it was in the family for about a hundred years.

Then Grandfather Wilkinson had a warehouse on the corner of Jessie and New Anthony Streets in San Francisco, which is about a half block from the Palace Hotel between New Montgomery and Second Street. This little extra amount of income helped to finance the trip to New York during

Father's sabbatical year. Dad's salary never would have been enough to support all of that, I'm sure; especially all the music and cultural life which Mother wanted to invest in for us. So we had a good groundwork laid as young people for the year in New York. We were capable, in other words, of going to New York and appreciating what we were seeing. It wasn't like being thrown suddenly into a cold bath.

Father's Activities at the University of California, Berkeley

Wyckoff: Well, among the interesting friends of those early days ... of course my father, Leon Richardson, worked very closely with Mrs. George Hearst, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who knew my mother's grandparents! She made some remarkable gifts to the University and her benefactions were very great. She was a woman of real intellectual drive and a person with imagination and it always was astounding to me that she had such an incredibly different type of son, who didn't seem to share the kinds of values that she had at all. Yet she never would allow anyone to say a word against him. In fact, the whole room froze if anyone dared even hint to say anything critical of him; she was very loyal to him. She would invite us down to her beautiful place at the Hacienda in Pleasanton, and we would go and spend the weekend once in a while.

Jarrell: The whole family?

Wyckoff: Yes, the whole family. Sometimes we would visit there or she would come to see us. We were in touch off and on about lots of things. This was so because my father was always working with her on some project. My father was a kind of "man of all work." Mother used to tease him and say, "Well, if they've got a committee and they don't know who to make chairman, they always give it to you, Leon, because you are incapable of saying no." He was willing and helpful and that sort of thing.

I think his duties as a professor were not very arduous. The Latin Department was not all that popular because who wanted to learn Latin? The nuns wanted to and the medical students wanted to. He had students who were going to have to learn a large scientific classification system where the nomenclature was based on Latin. So he had these people in his classes. There were a few really distinguished people who stood out and were going to become writers. For example, Sidney Howard was a student of Latin because he wanted all the benefits of a classical education before becoming a writer. Sydney Howard was no relation to Mrs. John (Mary) Galen Howard. Sydney Howard was John L. Howard's son. He was a student of my father's. He was interested from the beginning in being a writer. He was one of the few people who was studying Latin. He was interested

neither in a monastery nor in a medical or a scientific career. He wanted to gain the literary and language value of Latin. He was a very spritely, lively person, full of fun and adventure, and very entertaining. He would come to the house along with John Palache and some of the other young friends of his age, and they would go up to my father's study at night. I slept under the study and could hear all of the great conversations going on up there. It was quite an intellectually stimulating relationship for everyone concerned. It made him into a great writer, there's no doubt. The same was true of John Palache and various other students. The Palaches were a fascinating family in Berkeley. I only knew the younger daughter Anita of the old Whitney Palache who was the father of the group (my grandfather's generation). She was the one who bought my first little sculpture, a little blue nun which is in her home in Carmel. Whitney Junior was the one who came closest to my family. He was in and out because he was a student of my father's and was very, very often in the home. They were quite an interesting family. They were Portuguese Jews of a very distinguished order. They brought a certain kind of culture to Berkeley. There were others of that group. Jessica Peixotto was one.

Jarrell: Also Portuguese?

Wyckoff: Yes, also Portuguese.

My father loved Latin in the sense that to him it was a joy and a beautiful thing. I've been told by the nuns and the various others who took his courses that he taught by the device of enthusiasm, never by drumming people into saying things over and over again or trying to memorize things by rote. He would read the Latin to them and have them read it and try to make the living language come out. Of course he had gone to the University of Berlin where they taught in Latin. He had to learn Latin so that it became a living language to him. His life at the University of Berlin where he was from 1890 to '93 -- I'm not sure those are the exact years -- was a constant love affair with Latin. He was really in love with the language and it shone through. People like Sidney Howard who felt the same way and who really responded would get Father so excited over them as students that he'd have them over to the house. Father had a study upstairs, and they would go up after dinner to the study where I would hear them talking in Latin. They would be discussing the wonderful things in the works of some of his various true loves among the great Latin writers, such as Horace. He did likewise with the Isaac Flagg Circle: Professors Hagg, Arthur Ryder Linforth and T. Peterson.

Jarrell: Was he a Greek scholar as well?

Wyckoff: Well, this was one of the strangest things. Years before, when he was a student at the University of Michigan, he met Charles Mills Gayley. He became a great inspiration to Dad. Greek mythology and the whole of the great Greek culture was the thing that had entranced him then and Latin was only secondary to him. Greek was the thing that was his first great love. I was so shocked once where we were standing in one of the rooms in Pompeii, in one of the palaces there ... and I looked at this room that had murals on the walls, including some rather bad landscapes with imitation vines and things -- as though you were looking out of a window which wasn't there. I said, "My goodness, these people had the same kind of a approach to art that they do in America." The Romans were very like the Americans. They had that sort of commercial approach to things as we do.

Jarrell: Extremely practical.

Wyckoff: Well, I said, "Dad, why did you want to teach Latin and not Greek?" He said, "I didn't. I wanted to teach Greek, but there was an opening in Latin." You know that just killed me. I don't know why. I never got over it. To me, that somebody would take the opening in Latin and never go back to their true love in Greek. Yet I suppose what happened was that he found great things after he got to mining in the Latin. There is, of course, a wonderful literature in Latin.

But I fell in love with the Greek culture. Being more interested in sculpture and in this kind of thing, I had a great reaction to the beauty of the Greek civilization that I never felt about the Roman civilization at all. To me, they were a bunch of commercial highbinders. They were great imperialists, there's no doubt about that. There is a similarity between the two, there's no question about that, but I don't sympathize too much with it.

So, anyway, my father was a tower of strength at the University. He was willing to do all the little chores that needed to be done to make a great institution like that function.

University of California Extension

Wyckoff: He gradually worked his way into being the Head of the Extension Division which was an ideal spot for him because he was deeply interested in adult education. His interest in printing went back to his days in Berlin. He realized that the printing of the small book that could be held in the hand, or carried about in the pocket, occurred in the very early days of printing, when learning came out of the monasteries and convents. It was an intellectual revolution that was a very exciting period that laid the groundwork for the Renaissance. I think from that time on,

my father had the feeling that education ought to be a lifelong process. He invented the phrase, "Lifelong Learning." He named the little educational magazine that he put out in the early days "Lifelong Learning." It was a very sacred feeling with him. He felt that it was a terribly important thing for the University to be doing.

He had a great difference of opinion with Alexander Meiklejohn about how adult education should go. My father felt that it should be available to everybody. He wanted a bargain-basement sale of everything for all people. The desire to learn should come from within the person. He should be able to go and get what he wanted at the University. Of course Alexander Meiklejohn was much more interested in developing the elite thinker, really. He was directing his adult education to the intellectual much more than my father was. Robert Hutchins and his great books and Meiklejohn had a very different approach. I know one of the things my father felt very strongly about was that adult education, should be within the financial means of every adult. He said, "You should never charge more than six dollars for a course." I wish the University Extension felt the same way today instead of charging sixty dollars a course.

Jarrell: Yes, I see ...

Wyckoff: And yet curiously enough, the University Extension Division, not the Agricultural Extension you understand, made enough money on that little six dollars to be able to buy the University Extension Building on Powell Street in San Francisco which was quite a step in those days, you know. It was able to enlarge and become a really tremendous organization. But it was after Father left that they began to charge the really high prices for tuition. I often wonder whether they have to go to the California Legislature for extra funds for doing what they're doing.

Jarrell: Apparently they don't. They're required to fund all their own programs and courses from enrollment fees.

Wyckoff: That's good. Well my father believed that you should not have to go to the legislature for any money and that the Extension Division should support itself. With the proper management, he was able to make it function.

Jarrell: But I'm interested to know, was his notion for establishing University Extension so that working people could be enabled to continue learning or pursuing their educational interests? Was this one of the reasons why extension was founded?

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: It was set up for people who had to work and could not become regular University students?

Wyckoff: Right. It was "Lifelong Learning." In other words, if you hadn't been able to go through high school, you could get from the Extension Division what would be the equivalent courses. Extension Division continued on from what later became the adult evening high school, to become University Extension.

Jarrell: So there were many different levels?

Wyckoff: No, they meshed right together.

Jarrell: I see.

Wyckoff: The adult evening high school of course was totally free, I think. University Extension cost six dollars.

Jarrell: Would you like to talk about the early Berkeley community and about some of its people?

Wyckoff: Oh, I was going to get to the Berkeley Club.

Jarrell: Okay, we can talk about that.

San Francisco Bay Area Cultural Activities

Wyckoff: I really think it makes more sense to start with the Berkeley Club. We'll try to divide it up so that I stick to the early days.

Jarrell: I'd like to talk with you about early community life in Berkeley. Since both you and your family participated so fully in the cultural and academic life within the community, could you talk a little bit about what elements and what kinds of people you think characterized it?

Wyckoff: Well, I think Berkeley was very much a part of the world community of scholars. It had distinguished scholars who were permanent members of the faculty. There were also many visiting scholars who came from the great institutions of learning. My father was a man who was always called upon to do the chores that made a university run. He was willing and he was friendly and he enjoyed that kind of thing. So he was often put in charge of things like summer sessions and inviting scholars to come teach at Berkeley. He would arrange for their residence, their care, their travel, and everything necessary to get them to Berkeley. This enabled him to have a relationship with these people that was very interesting. It was rather close. He was able to have them in the home and entertain them and invite others to come and

meet them. He took upon himself and Mother the job of entertaining them. We have many early letters of correspondence with some of these great scholars. They may be found in the records that I've given to the Bancroft Library. I have a few others here.

Grandfather Wilkinson was considered at that time much more of an intellectual than my father; he was an older man, he was well-established, he was known not only as a man who was in charge of an important institution -- the Institution for the Deaf and Blind -- but was a pioneer in the field of trying to investigate the psychological aspects of blindness, deafness, and all of the handicaps that went with them. He was, perhaps, the first social worker to arrive in California. He came after the Gold Rush; he arrived in 1866 not to find gold, but to take care of children. So he was known as a very interesting pioneer in the great annals of California. The people who made their money in the railroads and in prospecting were generous. They gave him enough to get his experiments going and his institution established. He was finally able to make it into a public institution. In the course of all this Grandfather Wilkinson was extremely intellectually eager to participate in all of the relationships with the scholars who came to Berkeley.

Institute for the Deaf and Blind

Wyckoff: You have to realize that the Institution for the Deaf and Blind was formed before the University was established. It was a going concern. At one time it was larger than the University.

Jarrell: What year was it founded?

Wyckoff: I can't give you the exact year, but I think it was founded in 1860. Nobody knew what to do with the handicapped children who were brought along by their parents to California.

Jarrell: Briefly, could you tell me how your Grandfather Wilkinson became interested in handicapped children?

Wyckoff: I have here [a published] report of the Institution which is a thick publication of the state.

Jarrell: Oh, I see.

Wyckoff: I think there's also a copy at Bancroft. He became interested back East. He went to Union College in Schenectady, and then when he graduated, he decided that he wanted to be a teacher. He just happened to meet one of his classmates who was interested in the subject. He got to exploring the subject and went down to Gallaudet College in

Washington, D.C., which was the earliest national school for the deaf. There he really got deeply interested and decided that he wanted to make this his life's work. So he came out to California to take over what was a tiny little day-school set up by a couple who were trying to care for just a handful of children. He took over as their first director, and made it into a very interesting institution.

Berkeley Community Institutions and Activities

Wyckoff: Berkeley's life was a curious thing. As the University grew and became more dominant, the leaders in the town became more interested in participating in its growth and development. One of the organizations that was set up to maintain good communication between the town and the University was something called the Berkeley Club. My father belonged to the Berkeley Club and so did my grandfather. He was a member from much earlier. In fact, I think he proposed my father for membership. But its membership consisted of half businessmen, lawyers or doctors -- people who were from outside the University -- and half faculty members. They maintained that ratio. It was a very proper, Bostonian kind of intellectual exercise. They met for dinner and listened to dissertations. Then they would discuss the dissertations. As far as I know, they still do it. It's done as an intellectual exercise, an exercise in communication. The scholars were not the only ones that presented the papers; the business people did so also and others commented on them. Well, it's always kept a relationship going between these groups. It was very stimulating and very good for both the University and for the business community. There never was the kind of "town and gown" problem which many University towns have today. But in the early days of Berkeley there was no such problem.

Berkeley Families and Friends

Jarrell: Would you talk about some of the people who were close to your family? Not necessarily University people but individuals in the community. You mentioned some old Berkeley families, for instance, in our earlier discussions.

Wyckoff: Let me get that list of mine. Do you have any people in particular that you are interested in knowing something about?

Jarrell: No, I don't. The ones that you think might be most interesting will be fine. I'm not familiar with most of those names you have, except the Hilgards.

Wyckoff: Well, why don't I just run down this list and just identify them?

Jarrell: That would be fine.

Wyckoff: Well, I'll just start off with the way they pop into my mind.

Professor George Plimpton Adams and his wife, Mary Adams, were great friends of my mother and father. He was a professor of philosophy who spoke in a very high soprano voice. It always surprised everybody that he spoke in such a very high voice. He was a wonderful professor of philosophy and very much loved. The Adams had a large family of children who were our friends. Along with a lot of the early Berkeley people, they had a tract of land up on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe. They had little cottages. There was Louis Bartlett, who was the mayor of Berkeley, and his wife Mary (Olney), were early initiators of the cottages. The Adams and the Bartletts and many others of the faculty spent their summers at Lake Tahoe. We used to go up and stay sometimes in their cottages. These were self-built cottages. George Adams and his wife built their house. I remember Mary Adams shingling the roof once. I remember she had on a gold turban hat which looked perfectly marvelous as she was wielding her shingling ax. We went on many ski trips with their children. The Adams daughter married a Norwegian sea captain and lives here in Santa Cruz County. She sees her husband one month a year when he comes home. She's raised a large family and she lives here on Trout Gulch Road. You'll have to meet her. She's a delightful person. We were very ardent lovers of the mountains. Most of the children of that generation were great ones for exploring the mountains.

Now, let's see, Reverend John McLean was the minister of the First Congregational Church in the early days. His daughter, Mary McLean (Olney) married Warren Olney, who was the first lawyer member of this family that had many, many lawyers. I think there are five generations of lawyers from that family. Some of them have been on the State Supreme Court. They have been distinguished lawyers, all of them. Warren was of the third generation. He was one of my playmates as a child.

Reverend Earl Wilbur was the minister of the Unitarian Church. They're trying to save that beautiful little church from destruction. The Unitarians were quite a strong group in Berkeley at that time. My husband's grandmother, Lois Wyckoff, was an ardent member of the First Unitarian Church. She used to stand on the corner of Telegraph Avenue and pass out leaflets for the First Unitarian Church. She was a wonderful old lady who lived at the Carlton Hotel in Berkeley. She would never leave the doors of the University, because she liked the intellectual atmosphere of Berkeley.

Jarrell: What were your family's religious inclinations?

Wyckoff: Our family were all Congregationalists. We came from New England and even though Grandfather Richardson founded the Unitarian Church in Michigan and was an ardent Unitarian, my father never followed him. Grandfather went into the Congregational Church which was a result of my mother's influence. In those days, I really think protestants were influenced in a small town by an inspirational man. They would follow him to whatever his church was, provided it was reasonably within the limits of what they were interested in. This happened, for example, if the folks were protestants. The Roman Catholics pretty well stuck to their own group. They wouldn't do this. But the others would. They would go from one group of protestants to another without too much difficulty.

Here is a picture of Warren Gregory. The Gregory family had a beautiful home up on a hill in back of the University near Max Radin's home. Mrs. Gregory raised a large family of children and we knew all of them. She was known as Sadie. She was a very strong character and a person who really dominated a social group. She was the kind of person who entertained a lot and was the center of a kind of a salon. People came and stayed at her place. As you know, her sons have become distinguished lawyers. Her husband was a very distinguished lawyer. Her daughter Beth was a very good friend of mine. She lived next door to me when I was first married in San Francisco. She married Sherman Kent, a history professor at Yale. They have been in and out of Washington where he's occasionally been with the State Department. We still see them. They own a tract of land on top of the Santa Cruz Mountains where Jack Gregory, Sadie's youngest son, lives. A number of them have summer homes there. The Gregory's still play the old family games. Everybody had to go out and do some violent physical activity as part of their family reunions. "Capture the flag" was the game that they played. They still do it right down to this day with the next generation.

Mrs. John Galen Howard had an enormous impact on our family. Her husband was the architect who designed the classical buildings of white granite stone like Wheeler Hall, the Library, and the main buildings that made up the University in 1926. I graduated from college about that time. Mr. John Galen Howard died rather early. The Howard's three sons and daughter were very good friends of ours. They really had quite an influence on our lives. Mrs. Howard and her sons were really adventurous travelers. They loved to explore all the nooks and crannies of Europe. Mother had a great regard for Mrs. Howard and she would never plan a trip to Europe without asking her, "Well, where did you stay in Vienna?" or "Where did you stay in Paris?" Mrs. Howard had very limited funds to travel on; she had a large family, and she had many of the same problems that we had. She had the same sense of adventure about travel, and she believed that

you met the people and you lived a much better life if you stayed in an old, poor, small, modest hotel in an interesting part of town. Well, we found ourselves in some delightful places when we went to Europe. We always went and stayed in the places recommended by the Howards. We always had great adventures when we did. I'll never forget some of the places. They were marvelous places, but I think most American tourists would not like them. For one thing, they hardly ever had modern plumbing, if any. And they also were places where you would have some very startling developments. In Marseilles, for example, we found this place, and we got in late at night and went into it and went to bed. It was sort of a tall-ceilinged, victorian room. The rooms that my sister and I were in had great high French doors. In the morning, we got up, opened the French doors, and below us (we were on the second floor), was a gigantic fish market on the harbor with all the fish spread out.

Jarrell: Spread out right below you?

Wyckoff: Just six feet below us. The whole of Marseilles harbor could be seen with all the wonderful little fishing boats coming and going. Of course the smell was terrific, but the sights were marvelous. We stayed in this place and explored the noise of rumbling carts going up and down the cobblestone streets of the harbor of Marseilles.

Jarrell: This was where Mrs. Howard had stayed?

Wyckoff: Well, this was where Mrs. Howard had recommended that we go. It was, of course, where her boys had gone. Her boys were brilliant, talented, and artists. They followed in their father's talents, there's no doubt.

Oh, one other place we stayed at that I will not forget was in Vienna. This was during the depths of the Depression, and there was very little employment. We went into what was called the Hotel Terminus. We thought it was rather an odd place. There were all these maids that seemed to be lined up along the hallway. As Mother came through the door, they all dropped on their knees and tried to kiss her hand. They kept saying, "Kues die Hand, madam." We couldn't understand this strange behavior. So we went to our little room and settled down and then tried to make a plan for our visit. When we went someplace, we stayed a month or two. We didn't just go, hit and run. Well, our friends whom we visited raised their eyebrows very high when they heard where we were staying. It seems that we were staying in a house of assignation and we didn't know it until we got there. It had been recommended by one of Mrs. Howard's sons. We stayed there however, because it was an extraordinary adventure. It did shake my father pretty badly, I must say. Mother was the one who wouldn't get out!

George Stratton was a professor of psychology at the University. I took a course from him. It was to me excruciatingly dull. I gave up that subject completely after that. To me, it was wandering around in the midst of nothing. I could not get hold of anything. We were very fond of the Strattons as camping companions; they were good company. They had two daughters and a son. Florence Stratton, their daughter, was my age. I'll never forget a comical explosion that occurred in camp one time when I gave a ground squirrel to little Florence. I thought I was giving her a great present. The ground squirrel bit her through the palm. Her mother came over and grabbed me by the neck and gave me a spanking because she thought I did it deliberately. My father suddenly came to my defense. He took hold of Alice and said, "Don't you strike my daughter!" That's the only time he ever came to my defense. Mrs. Stratton was very large and vigorous and my father was very small and so it was rather a funny set-to.

Lydia Garber was a true victorian. She sat in a rocking chair beside an aviary and watched her birds and she was one of those vague, sweet ladies who had the "vapors" and who just led the life of a recluse. She was always beautifully draped in floaty shawls and had that air of fading out into another world. She was an incredible person. We always went to call on Lydia Garber, so she couldn't have been much of a recluse; maybe she was lonely. Mother insisted that we go and see her occasionally. She did enjoy showing us her birds. She had wonderful varieties of tropical birds. In those days victorian houses had conservatories. Her's had an aviary, and it also had a "Turkish Corner." There were always bead curtains hanging down over the Turkish corner. In the "Turkish Corner" there were these little tabourets with Turkish coffee sets on top. Lydia Garber was the daughter of Judge Garber who was a very distinguished intellectual leader of the community in the very early days. He was also a member of the Berkeley Club. You'll find his picture in the collection of the Berkeley Club photographs.

Another notable individual was Frank Stringham, who was mayor of Oakland. There's a funny story about Frank. Once, right in the middle of his election, some folks decided that he was not a resident of Oakland and couldn't run for mayor. This started an uproar. Frank was sued for false pretenses. He got some surveyors and engineers and they surveyed the edge of Berkeley and found that he slept with his head in Oakland and his feet in Berkeley. The city line ran right through the middle of his house. But since his head was in Oakland, they allowed him to run. The Stringhams lived in the house next door to Lydia Garber because Juliette, I think, was Lydia's sister.

Jarrell: Did a lot of these people know each other? Would you say this was a circle?

Wyckoff: Oh yes. They all knew each other intimately.

Jarrell: This is a little world we're talking about here?

Wyckoff: Yes, oh yes. This was a little world. They knew each other well.

Charles Noble, a mathematics professor, had a son, Charles, who was a classmate of mine in college and later became a doctor. The Nobles had a beautiful cottage up at Fallen Leaf where we used to go and stay. They were very generous about letting us have it for a month at a time. They were very strict on how we took care of that cabin. We always got a lecture from Professor Noble before we went up. He would lecture on the proper procedures for opening up and closing the cabin. I'll never forget his talking to my mother and father about this. He said, "Now, Leon and Maud, you will find in the center of the cabin a rat-proof sarcophagus and in it is the bedding." We had to pay great attention to the rat-proof sarcophagus and be sure to store the bedding in it, 'cause the mountain rats were very destructive of mattresses and bedding. The Nobles were practical about the way they closed up their cabin so we followed their instructions.

Now Eugene Hilgard I did not know very well because he was a very old man when I was a very young girl. The Hilgards had a huge old victorian house. It looked huge to me, but maybe it wasn't. It was on Bancroft Way, right across from where Boalt Hall is now. There was one of those rambling gardens with plants not indigenous to Berkeley growing in it. These plants were experiments that he was growing. You went through this jungle of wonderful, strange plants to get to the Hilgard house. Eugene Hilgard had two daughters who were the epitome of early victorian ladies. It seems to me that they were always in mourning, because when Mrs. Hilgard died, you mourned the rest of your life in this particular family. They were very much the old maid variety; they were obviously never going to marry.

Jarrell: But these were your childhood friends?

Wyckoff: No, these were my mother's childhood friends.

Jarrell: Oh.

Wyckoff: These were "Aunt" Alice and "Aunt" Louise and they were my mother's age. I have a complete correspondence that went on over the years between Alice Hilgard and my mother on all the happenings of early Berkeley. And all of the planning of a trip to Europe in the 1880's and 90's. There are all kinds of details, the most infinite amount of detail in those letters. They had time to write about every single daily happening. It's just incredible the amount of leisure

time those people had to do these things and yet they seemed to accomplish a lot. Alice and Louise spoiled us tremendously. We used to go and visit them. They also had an aviary and we had to go and see that.

Jarrell: Did you have an aviary?

Wyckoff: Yes. But our aviary was not in the house. It was outdoors and it had 80 canaries in it and it was abated as a "nuisance" by the police department because the birds sang and made too much noise. We also had a pigeon house. My brother John loved pets so he collected a large number of them. The police frequently came up to the house saying our animals and our birds made too much noise.

Mrs. Andrew Davis was part of a very intellectual group. This group was more intellectually inclined than some of the other Jewish families who settled in San Francisco. They all supported our great music and endowed the museums and the symphonies and did great things for San Francisco.

Jarrell: What about Charles Mills Gayley?

Wyckoff: Charles Mills Gayley was just a little bit older than my father. As a matter of fact, he was one of my father's teachers at Michigan. When he came out to California, he sent for my father. This was, by the way, how my father happened to teach at Berkeley. Gayley was on the lookout for people. He knew my father in Michigan, and encouraged him to come out here as a very young man. My father arrived out here and taught for a year and then decided that what he should do would be to go and get his Ph.D. at the University of Berlin. So he spent three years in Berlin.

The Gayleys had two daughters, Mary and Betty. Mary died as a young woman. Betty is married and has two children. She married a very nice man, Jack Stephenson. He's a stock and bond man in San Francisco. They lead a very nice quiet life in San Francisco. I see Mary (Mrs. Charles Mills Gayley) from time to time. Mary has a wealth of information about early Berkeley. Somebody ought to interview her because Mary's memory is good and she really would be quite a valuable person to talk to.

Robert Hunter was an economics professor.. I think he either came from Yale or went back to Yale and was here for a while at the University. His children were very good friends of ours. In fact the young Robert was the one who got me interested in horseback riding. He let me use his horse, or his brother's horse; there were two children, Phelps and Robert. We also got to be quite close. I remember when I was in college going back and visiting his grandmother in upstate New York on an island in St. Regis

Lake. She was part of an interesting family, the Anson Phelps Stokes family. They were quite a distinguished family back East. They had very unusual members. Rose Pastor Stokes, for example, was a revolutionary. She was the first I ever met. Revolutionaries in those days were generally very upper class and very intellectual. She stirred up the chickens and kept everything in an uproar. Her brother was the minister of one of the big churches back East.

Jarrell: This was a very wealthy family?

Wyckoff: Oh yes, very. They were also very liberal. This created great consternation in the ranks of the upper classes of back East.

Max Radin was a fascinating man. He was professor of law at the University. He was also a great Latin scholar. He was one of those men who just was a jack of all trades. He took over the Greek Theater and he put on a great many plays there. As a kind of an amateur thing, he was head of the drama group that put on all the Shaw plays, and lots of other good plays.

He had a daughter, Rhea Radin, who was my age. Rhea was an only child. She was very devoted to her father whom she regarded as the ideal man. There just wasn't anybody as good as he was. As a result, Rhea had an awful time finding a husband. Nobody could measure up to this giant of a man that she had been raised with.

Rhea and I have had some very interesting experiences. She and I both went to work for the State Relief Administration during the War. Rhea was a social worker who was placed down in the valley, in Visalia, right in the middle of the early days of strikes and troubles over low wages and terrible working conditions in the dustbowl days. Rhea belonged to an organization that tried to organize the workers in the State Relief Administration. They weren't paid any too much either. So she got mixed up in this thing. In the early days, it was called the State, County, and Municipal Workers' Union.

There was a committee, Sam Yorty's committee, which was one of these red-baiting, red-hunting type of things, and he was bound and determined to try to root out all the people that were doing this organizing within government. I remember Rhea refused to give the names of the people she worked with to the people who were investigating. This committee subpoenaed her, got her on the stand, and she refused to give the names of the members of the local down in Visalia. The result of this was that they tried to put her on a red list (or blacklist). There was lot of discussion about whether they'd fire her for being a red. Yorty put the

pressure on. Oh dear, years later this thing cropped up in the time of the McCarthy era. She finally just quit government and went to work in real estate in Washington.

The John Dewey Family

Jarrell: Let's talk about John and Jane Dewey.

Wyckoff: All right.

Jarrell: I would like to know how your father came to correspond with him.

Wyckoff: Well, John Dewey was a very close friend of my father's. They had known each other at Michigan. And then later his daughter Jane lived with us while she went to college here for about a year or more.

Jarrell: You mentioned some correspondence.

Wyckoff: Yes. John and I were good friends. I was trying to become an artist. He was very interested in why. He would write and cross-examine me about why I did this; why I felt a certain way about something. I would answer as best I could. We carried on a great deal of correspondence which I have upstairs. Maybe we can work it into the record.

Jarrell: What kind of man was he?

Wyckoff: He was my father's age. He was a very relaxed and permissive kind of person. He wasn't the kind of person that made you feel stiff and uncomfortable. His wife was darling. She was just like an old shoe. She was the first woman I ever knew who refused flatly to wear corsets or a bra. She said she liked to be that way and never mind. Yet she was just darling and everybody just loved her. Her daughter, Jane, was a kind of ... all of the children were much more tense than their father and mother. They seemed to be struggling with something.

The Dewey's adopted a little Italian boy. He was adopted, I'm afraid, as kind of an experiment to see whether their children could adapt properly to new social conditions and whether the little Italian boy could adapt also. He was not a baby. He was about, I think, about seven or eight years old when he was adopted. I remember there was quite a bit of tension about that situation. I think it was done to break up any sense of divine privilege that the children

might have had about being the children of a scholar. John Dewey wanted his children to feel that this boy was every bit as good as they were. They were, of course, very fond of each other. But they all went their own way. The Italian boy as I recall, did not pursue an intellectual career, but went to the level where his background had indicated that he came from. The other children became brilliant scientists.

Jarrell: A rather bizarre way to make a point though, wasn't it?

Wyckoff: It was. Yes, very strange. But that's what they did. John was a prolific writer of course and enormously influential. He was very much misinterpreted during the course of his life. But he was a giant, an intellectual giant. Yet like so many intellectual people he was an easy person to get along with. Once we met him in Vienna. His wife wasn't with him then. She became an invalid later on and she died considerably younger than he. Anyway, we met in Vienna and he was oh, very jolly. He wanted to go and explore the city and go out to Grinzing. He got us to go out every night which was something we didn't often do. We were used to spending our days exploring things like the museums and the churches, the ice skating rinks, or whatever was going on. At night we went to the theater. We didn't do what a lot of tourists do which is to go out nightclubbing and that sort of thing. So John wanted to explore the drinking establishments in the little town, out at Grinzing, and he used to get us all fired up and make us go out and do these things. Of course my father loved this idea cause he wanted to go. It was Mother who didn't care for that sort of thing too much. So John Dewey kept us stirred up in Vienna. We really had a very jolly time with him.

Henry & Charles Breasted

Wyckoff: Now, let's see ... Henry and Charles Breasted. Well, Henry Breasted was the great Egyptologist who was involved in the discovery of some of the great archaeological finds. He came to Berkeley and spent a lot of time with us. I think my father was instrumental in bringing him out. Henry's son, Charles, was in our home and stayed with us and visited a great deal with us.

Jarrell: He was your age?

Wyckoff: Yes. Charles was my age. Charles and I used to [go] around a lot together. Henry Breasted invited us to come to Chicago where we saw the great discoveries found in the excavations in Egypt. We heard firsthand from Henry Breasted the stories of those excavations. It was very

exciting to hear the tale from the original scholars that made the discovery.

The Bancrofts

Wyckoff: The Bancroft Family was an interesting family. They owned most of the land that is now Walnut Creek. There were large walnut orchards on that land. There were several sons in the Bancroft Family. There was Philip and Frank; there was another but I've forgotten his name.

Jarrell: Did you know Philip?

Wyckoff: I knew Philip slightly. I knew Frank much better and I used to go and visit in his home because his son, Jim, was one of my early swains. Jimmy and I were very close friends. I used to visit with him on the weekends a great deal.

I learned a little bit about what happens on a big farm. They had a labor camp; I'd never seen a labor camp. I remember going out and driving around in a Model T Ford on this farm. We drove out to the labor camp where there was a great big, square, elevated tank full of hot water with people sitting in it and a fire burning under it. And I thought my God they're cooking people. These people were taking their daily, end-of-the-day bath. They looked like little red lobsters in this tank. It was a great sight. I'll never forget that. Well, Philip maintained a yard around his house that had these terrible, ferocious dogs in it. If anybody came who was not welcome, they would turn those dogs loose.

Frank was a little bit silly. He was an amateur eugenicist. Frank kept trying to have Jimmy and me get married. He'd say, "You have the proper genes. You should get married." And every time I went over there, I'd get a lecture on getting married and Jimmy would look tired. He'd say, "Well, we're not ready for that." I would look sheepish. We would have to listen to Frank's lecture on why eugenics indicated that we should be married. Well, we didn't marry each other. We each selected different people. Frank just thought he could plan a marriage for his children and they'd really go for it. But Jimmy and I remained friends in spite of his father's big ideas. His mother was Eleanor Stow Bancroft, M.D.

The van Loben Sels

Wyckoff: Let's see, who else do you want to know about. Oh, the van Loben Sels. Now there was an interesting family. That was a very early-day family. They owned a big tract of land right next to Moss Park in Oakland. This park wasn't in the center of town. It was sort of a big outlying

garden. The old man van Loben Sels who was the head of the family used to hold court in that garden. He was a great heavyset fellow. And they seemed to me to be a gigantic family.

Jarrell: Did they have a big victorian house on this property?

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: I think it still stands, doesn't it?

Wyckoff: Well, I don't know if the house in Moss Park stands. That was the Moss' house and you may be thinking of that.

Jarrell: Oh.

Wyckoff: I can remember being in the yard with the great old man. I remember going down there as a child. He was stone bald and had a great big dent right in the middle of the top of his head. I have been told that when I was very young, I went up to him and said, "Mr. van Loben Sels you have a birdbath in the top of your head."

He sat motionless in the garden and I wanted to pour some water in the top of that hole and see if a bird would come and take a bath in it.

Jarrell: Oh!

Wyckoff: Well, he didn't seem to mind it, and he told me the story of how he got the dent. He said, "I got that dent in the top of my head by being thrown against the anchor on a sailing ship in a big storm. It crushed the whole top of my head in. I didn't die," he said, "but they didn't know how to fix it and it was a long voyage, and when I got back to shore, my head was permanently shaped like that."

Jarrell: It was dented?

Wyckoff: It was dented. Then he said, "I've lost my hair since then." So there was this dent in the top of his head.

Jarrell: Hmm.

Wyckoff: Well, Mr. van Loben Sels had one son, Ernst, who married Eleanor Slate, Professor Slate's daughter. Professor Frederick Slate was a physics professor at the University. He was a very famous scholar and a very distinguished man. He was one of the finest physicists in the whole country. He was a sandy-haired man -- always reminded me of a little terrier. On his cheeks were airedale whiskers of sorts and he was a peppery little man,

too. He was not easy to get along with. A lot of stories used to be told about how temperamental he was. Well anyway, his daughter, Eleanor, married Ernst van Loben Sels, and they were really close friends of my mother's. Marjorie Slate, who was the other younger daughter, never married. She lived in San Francisco and was an artist and also a very close friend of my mother's.

Probably the most interesting member of that family was Moritz van Loben Sels who married and lived on the big van Loben Sel's Ranch up near Knight's Landing. Their ranch was up the valley. Now that was a remarkable home. We visited with them several times.

There's a great story about that home, about that family. Mrs. van Loben Sels, Moritz's wife, believed in spirits. She had a master spirit who spoke to her. She would hear its voice distinctly. It would ask her to do certain things. Moritz adored her, and he humored her. He didn't object or worry a bit about this spirit. It didn't come all the time, but it did show up occasionally.

Anyway, the van Loben Sels had ten or twelve children. It was a tremendous family. I remember Mrs. van Loben Sels was a great athlete. She would get up in the morning and before breakfast she would run about a mile or two out to the river and back. This happened every morning. She was built like a racehorse. She was just a gorgeous looking creature. She led a very vigorous healthy life to say the least. She wasn't one to sit around and mope.

Well this spirit occasionally would ask her to do something. One day there was a knock on the door, and there was somebody who said he was a third cousin. He looked a little bit shabby and had on a loud check suit. The spirit spoke at that moment to Mrs. van Loben Sels. She went to her husband and said, "There is a man at the door who says he's my cousin, and he wants to see you. The spirit has just spoken to me and said, 'Moritz should do what this man asks.' He's going to ask you something. Please do what he asks because the master has said to do it." So, the cousin-whoever-he-was, came in and he wanted to sell Moritz some stock in a mine. He needed some money. It looked like pretty crummy stock. He wanted a couple of thousand dollars or so. So Moritz gave him the money, took the stock and threw it in the bottom drawer of his desk. He must have figured that was the end of his money. Soon he forgot all about it. Some months later, it might have been years later, I don't know, the spirit spoke again to Mrs. van Loben Sels and said, "Moritz should get out the stock and look at it." So she went to her husband and said, "The spirit just told me that it would be a good idea to take that stock that my cousin sold you and take a look at it." So Moritz got the stock out and looked at it. And she said,

"I think the spirit meant that we should go and look at the mine." So he said, "All right, dear. We'll go some day." She kept picking at him. Finally they decided to go and see what the mine was all about. So they got the old car out and drove up into the Mother Lode country where this mine was. Here it was a big wreck of a thing that obviously was all rusty and just in a mess. The spirit spoke again and said, "Pump out the mine." Well, this involved a little money. And of course she kept working on him and they finally ... to make a long story short, it turned out to be the Murchie Mine. They sold it for a million dollars to the Newmont Mining Company. Anyway, the spirit, as you can gather, was a friendly fellow! Moritz told this story to my husband. Moritz's lawyer was George Naus who was my husband's office associate in San Francisco. So the van Loben Sels family is (and was) a very interesting one. Incidentally, Eleanor and Ernst died and a foundation was set up in their name. The funds are used for the purpose of bringing about better relations between the races. Money is available for all sorts of efforts that are made to introduce minorities to jobs. It's a rather interesting foundation.

Jarrell: What was the source of income for this family?

Wyckoff: You know I never did find out. I suspect it was the original large family land holdings. There may have been money from Holland, but the pioneer father married a de Fremery and they had large land holdings, I believe.

CROSS-COUNTRY AUTOMOBILE TRIP, 1921

Jarrell: Well, now we're going to start into the outline of the 1920s. Now what year did you cross the continent with your entire family?

Wyckoff: Well, we had a Buick automobile with a top that folded back. I think it was a seven-passenger Buick. It was one of those long things that looked like a huge bathtub with everybody sitting in it. And of course we had a vast amount of baggage. My father always draped the baggage in the most extraordinary wrappings in order to keep it from scratching the surface of the car. He cherished his cars.

Jarrell: He must have been meticulous.

Wyckoff: Well, he never wanted to scratch the paint. So everything had to be wrapped in old flowered organdy curtains. The result was we looked like a traveling circus of some kind when we started out. It wasn't a neat, professional-looking pack at all. For example, in those days, you had running boards. A running board was wide enough to stack suitcases on it. It was about a foot wide. The suitcases fluttered as we went along. The running board

had an expanded metal fence of sorts that you attached to it to hold all the baggage onto either side. So everybody's suitcases were attached in this fashion. You never put anything on the top of the car because you occasionally wanted to take the top down. It was a cloth canvas top. You folded the top back. If it rained you could pull the top forward. So all the baggage was either on the side or on the back. We had three spare tires sticking out of the back. It was a funny sight when we started out. We decided we were going to see the United States by crossing the continent in this fashion.

Jarrell: This is what year now?

Wyckoff: This was 1921. Oh dear. I think I mentioned in my previous interview that I belonged to a little group of kids who loved to go riding on the hills. There were only two girls; there were four or five boys. We would play on the hills. The boys loved to do target practice, and they also did some hunting of course, but not in the Berkeley hills; they used to go elsewhere for that. The girls also learned how to shoot a gun in order to keep up with the boys. We were terrible tomboys. Anyway, I possessed a farewell gift that a young man gave me which was a beautiful, little pearl-handled revolver. It had a gun belt. There were little bullets for this thing that looked like a cowboy's gun. I wore that gun starting off on the journey back east with the family. It was like the wild west.

Jarrell: What did your parents think of this?

Wyckoff: Oh, they thought it was all right, if a bit silly. My father said, "I don't object to your carrying a gun provided you learn how to respect it." Then he taught me how to crawl under a fence with a gun. It is a very important thing not to blow your head off when you crawl under a fence with a gun. So when we started across the continent, we had this incredible weapon which was the only weapon we had with us. It was a strip of very bad road across the continent. Some parts of the road were good, but most of it was very bumpy and gravelly. It wasn't paved all the way. It had huge chuckholes in it. Our Buick was a good, strong car, but not too heavy. We used to find other heavier cars wrecked by the side of the road. This was sort of the early days when people were really trying to drive across the continent for the first time in numbers. Their cars were just not built for the long ride. Well, we started out and first went up to Reno. Then we started out across Nevada.

Wyckoff: Oh yes. We stayed in hotels once in a while and the hotels turned out to be such fleabags and such awful places that we almost gave up. We had blankets, but there

were not very many good camping spots along that highway. Anyway, we got into a wonderful Indian celebration at Battle Mountain, Nevada. I'll never forget that. I'd never seen a real Indian celebration with all of the regalia. I think it was their cattle roundup more than anything else, but they also had all their beautiful bright colors on. The colors were what fascinated me more than anything else.

There was one place called Montello, just beyond Elko, where we had planned to stay in a hotel. When we got to Montello, the hotel had burned down. We had to find another place. My father sort of went around the town and he finally found something that looked like a boarding house. He said, "They'll take us in and give us a couple of rooms. We can stay there." So ... this was a rickety old place. It was very hot that night. Our room was suffocating. It only had one window for ventilation. It just so happened that there was a big drunken poker game going on right next door to us. Only a thin wall separated Jane and me from this poker game next door. Well the noise was terrible. The shouting and squabbling was awful; the air was just as thick as soup. Jane and I decided we couldn't stand it and that we were going to just go out on the desert and sleep. We didn't care. So we climbed through the window, 'cause we didn't want to disturb Mother and Father, and took that gun of mine with us.

We took a couple of blankets too, then we just walked straight out of town. The town consisted of only a few houses. It was very tiny. We were on the edge of town anyway. It wasn't much of a walk. So we walked straight out into the desert and just spread out the blankets and lay down and went to sleep. Had a good night's sleep, too. I'll admit we brushed off a few tarantulas in the night but other than that it wasn't too bad. There were tarantula webs all over.

Jarrell: Aren't they dangerous?

Wyckoff: Yes, they're dangerous. Anyway, we were more afraid of those noisy cowboys than we were of the tarantulas. We had a beautiful night's rest. Of course we woke up very early. The sun came up there about 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning. When we woke up, we were very hungry. Well, we knew there was food in the car, so we rolled up our blankets and started back toward the little boarding house where our car was parked outside in a little shack or ramada. As we walked towards the car, we heard a noise, a scraping noise. The ground was covered with a bed of dry pine needles; they were desert pinon needles of some sort. They completely deadened our footfalls as we walked toward the car.

When we came around the corner to the car, here was a man bent over, filing the chain that held our three spare tires together. The noise of his filing had completely obliterated any sound of our approach. Well I had my gun. I put a bullet in and he didn't hear that. I walked up to within two feet of him. I took the gun out and I pointed it into the ground right behind him. Then I pulled the trigger and it sounded as though the end of the world had come, it was such a bang. He leapt about six feet in the air and I really think that man is still running. I never saw anybody take off so fast. So that's the only time we ever used the gun crossing the continent. I was so proud I went in to see my parents and said, "Well, I prevented a robbery of our tires with my weapon." Anyway that was the great event in Montello.

Well next we went on to Salt Lake. We did all the typical tourist things that you do nowadays if you ever take the time to do them in the first place. We visited the Mormon Tabernacle; we heard the pin drop, and we listened to the choir. We went swimming in Salt Lake and experienced that extraordinary feeling of floating in the salt water. These were all new experiences for us. We just thought they were wonderful.

The roads were terribly bad through Utah. We went to Medicine Bow and ran into a dust storm. It was unbelievable. When we came out of it most of the paint had been removed from the car. It was that bad. We were glad the covers were on the baggage because the covers were in shreds. We had to stop the car and go indoors at a little roadside place because the sand was cutting sand. It was really an amazing experience.

Well, then we went on over the Rockies into the corn country. They had this habit ... I guess people had this habit all over America but in the corn country it was particularly apparent. If a farmer wanted to dig a ditch from one field across the highway to another field, he didn't worry about the transcontinental traffic on the road. No, he would dig a ditch right straight across the road to run his water from one field to the next. He was always courteous enough to dig the ditch at an angle, so that when your car struck the ditch, instead of hitting it with one great bump, you hit it diagonally. You went back and forth and the shock was not so great. It didn't break your axle if you went slowly.

Well, I said, "What is that bunch of cars up there?" My father slowed down to take a look. He said, "That is a 'Thank you, Marm'." I said, "A what?" He said, "A 'Thank you, Marm' is a ditch dug diagonally across the road." So I said, "Well, why do you call it a 'Thank you, Marm'?" He said, "Because when a girl says, 'Thank you', she curtsies

and says, "Thank you, Ma'am. thank you, Ma'am'." So that's how it got its name. This name came directly out of New England, of course. Well there were cars broken down on either side of the "Thank you, Marm." We could see them ahead of us. They were big cars whose drivers weren't smart enough to know what was coming. Dad would go into low gear and go through the "Thank you, Marm" very carefully. We never broke our axles. I got hay fever from all the corn. I really suffered going through that corn belt. The corn was so incredible. They would have corn on the right, corn on the left, day after day, and it was tall corn. I'll never forget one particular place. This little house in the midst of this enormous corn field, a nice little cottage, had window boxes around it. In the window boxes was corn. I couldn't believe it.

Jarrell: (Laughter)

Wyckoff: I said, "Why does she plant corn in the window boxes?" "Well," my father said, "she may be testing out some new seeds."

Jarrell: How was the food you ate across the country?

Wyckoff: My brother John was forever getting sick from the food which was often contaminated. The steaks were so tough ... they just drove the cattle in off the range and slaughtered them. There were no fattening lots or anything of that sort. It's still that way, I'm afraid, in some parts of the country. Montana's very much that way. The food was not good to my way of thinking.

Well, we finally got to Chicago. My father of course had a great many friends at the University of Chicago, so we drove out there. My Uncle Harry Prescott -- he wasn't a true uncle, he was a cousin -- was a history professor there so we went out to see him. This was really our first view of a great big city. We went to the Art Institute, the Field Museum, and we met Mr. and Mrs. Carl Akeley. That was a very interesting experience for us. Akeley was the man who brought back most of the wildlife specimens for the Field Museum. His wife was famous as a lion hunter. She was a "huntress."

Jarrell: (Laughter)

Wyckoff: There were movies taken of the Akeley's hunting. You probably have them in your film collection in the University Library. Mrs. Akeley was sort of an Amazon type. She loved the limelight. They were really a very amusing couple. Anyway, they were considered to be very famous then.

Then we saw Professor Henry Breasted who was Father's friend. He was one of the Egyptologists who worked on the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. The Egyptian Museum at the University of Chicago was being built at that time. Then we went on to Detroit and over into Canada to what they call London, Canada. Then we went on to Niagara Falls, Syracuse, the Finger Lakes, Schenectady and ... oh, by the way, it was about that time that I got the news in the mail that I had passed my college board exams. I was 15 years old then. So I was very pleased that I got through those college boards. Well, when I got to Schenectady, I met Molly Platt who was a relative of ours. She wanted very much to have me go to Vassar so as to live near her. When I got one look at the Molly Platt family I decided I wasn't going to Vassar at all.

Jarrell: Why?

Wyckoff: I didn't like their approach to life. They were the missionary type. I had no sympathy at that time in my life for people like them. I thought they were sanctimonious and I just didn't like it. So I resisted. Then we went on to Albany and I saw Union College where my grandfather went to school. We toured Union College. I was very interested in Union College because it was a very old college. I was quite interested in why grandfather had gone there. Grandfather had come out of a rail-splitter family like Lincoln. He even came out of the Wisconsin woods. Omro, Wisconsin, was where he was born. He had to struggle just the way Lincoln did to get an education; and to get into college was a great achievement. So he went back, you see, to Albany to go to Union College and that's where he got started.

Well, then we went to visit Albert Whitney in White Plains. I think he was a professor at some university back there, I don't know, but he was a great friend of my father's. In White Plains we had our first car trouble.

Jarrell: You'd made it all the way across though.

Wyckoff: Yes, we made it all the way across the continent without car trouble. Didn't even have "Thank you, Marm" trouble. Considering what idiots we were about mechanics ... we just knew nothing about a car ... it was a miracle that we really got back east.

My father thought he was a great mechanic, but he was the most innocent man on earth when it came to a gasoline motor. I'll never forget one camping trip. We had a Model T Ford and Father used to back up about 12 feet to get a start for a 4-mile grade. He thought we needed a running start. Anyway, he would start up the 4-mile grade and the car would begin to get hot. This was the Feather River Canyon I'm

thinking of. Father gave us a great big horn in the back seat and we were to blow the horn as loud as we could. It was a one-way road and if you met anybody, they had to know so they could get way over to the side. There was just barely room to pass and it was a 1000-foot drop. It was very steep and the road was very rocky and very uncertain. The worst of it was there were these big mule teams of 20, 30 mules hauling things up and down that road. If you met one of those teams, there was no question about who had to get out of the way; we had to get out of the way. So anyway, we blew this horn and it was a horn that had a tremendous volume. It echoed off the walls of the canyon as we went up. I'll never forget going around one corner and thinking we were going to meet one of these mule teams. Instead, we passed a little automobile that had heard that horn and thought there must have been a locomotive engine or something coming round the bend. They had spent about 20 minutes getting themselves squeezed up against the side and we went sailing by. They were hopping mad.

Jarrell: (Laughter)

Wyckoff: Well, about halfway up that steep mountain, the car really conked out. I think what happened was that my father had been so frightened he'd either been riding the clutch too much, or doing something wrong. Anyway, the car just conked out. He made us all get out of the car. He tried to make it go without any passengers in it, because he thought it was too heavily loaded, but it wouldn't budge. After a while a little old Model T Ford, that's all that one used in the mountains in those days, came bouncing down the road and inside a little old lady all covered with dust. I remember she had dust all over her eyelashes. She was just a mass of white chalk dust 'cause it was such a dusty road. She got out of the car and came over to us. When she smiled, these big white teeth stood out against the dusty face. She said, "Well, what's the matter, bub?" She called my father "bub." He'd never been called "bub." He said, "Well, madam, my car doesn't seem to be functioning properly." "Well," she said, "let's see what I can do." With that, she simply tore up the floor boards, opened up something or other which was I think a transmission, looked inside and said, "Oh, that's simple." She reached down and grabbed a handful of dirt and threw it into the clutch. My father nearly fainted. He thought it was criminal. She screwed it back together. Then she said, "Well, bub, maybe it'll do you good to take a walk." She turned to my mother, and said, "Come on, Mom." Mother got into the car. She took the car and revved up the motor to a great roar (something my father never would have done because he was always conserving the engine). In a cloud of smoke she started up the mountain with Mother sitting in the seat. We all had to trudge four miles up to the top. She left the car at the top with Mother in it. Then she came straight

down the cliff, just sliding all the way. It was a wonder she didn't cause an avalanche. But she just slid right straight down the mountain to her car. There were about twenty zigzags to get up to the top. You drove four miles on the zigzags to the top and took about one mile coming down on the seat of your pants.

Jarrell: Like switchbacks.

Wyckoff: Yes. They were switchbacks. So I'll never forget that episode.

Jarrell: Lovely, just lovely.

Wyckoff: Oh, it was so funny.

Well, anyway, we finally finished our trip across the continent in spite of my father's great mechanical genius. So when we arrived in New York, we drove down Riverside Drive and down Fifth Avenue. I'd never seen a thing like a Fifth Avenue bus. They were double-decker buses. They were the joy of my life in New York. You could ride on top and they were such fun. We drove down to the end of Fifth Avenue and then drove over the Brooklyn Bridge to our cousin John Walton's house. John Walton was a really distant cousin. Harry and Frank Walton and their father John were three families that lived in Brooklyn Heights. John lived at 106 Willow Street; the others lived around the corner. They had several houses there. Brooklyn Heights, or Columbia Heights as it's [now] called, is the last street on the top of the cliff of Brooklyn looking across the East River to the Battery, Wall Street, Lower Manhattan. The view from the back of those houses was the most beautiful thing you ever saw 'cause it was the New York skyline. You could see all the way from the Statue of Liberty clear up the East River. You could see the harbor and all the busy shipping and loading going on down below. It was just a thrilling place to be.

Jarrell: Did you take a ferry across?

Wyckoff: No, the Brooklyn Bridge was built then.

Jarrell: Oh. I just wondered if they still had ferries there.

Wyckoff: Yes, they had ferries, but the ferries went to Staten Island and places like that. The Brooklyn Bridge was already built then. This was 1921, '22.

Jarrell: That's right. So you drove across?

Wyckoff: We drove across, yes. My father was a terrible driver. I'll never forget as we drove across that bridge, a

truck driver didn't like the way Father drove. He leaned over and he called my father all the dirty words in the English language -- a great flood of cursing.

Jarrell: But your father did all right and got you across?

Wyckoff: My father turned up and looked up at him and he said, "Well, my man, you talk like a fishwife!" The teamster was astounded. That was my father's only response. He never swore in his life. I never heard him or my mother utter a swear word. Never. The worst thing they ever said was something like "tarnation."

New York City

Wyckoff: So we got to Brooklyn and settled in this cousin's house for a few days while we went apartment hunting. We found an apartment at 196 MacDougal Street in New York which was two blocks below Washington Square.

Jarrell: Right in the Village.

Wyckoff: Right in the heart of the Village. It was the most wonderful location.

Jarrell: Oh, what a wonderful time to be there.

Wyckoff: Yes. It was beautiful. We were right up the street from the Provincetown Theater. All the old artists' centers were down there. It was just an exciting place to live. Of course it was partly an Italian slum. We lived in a compound which was an apartment house built on four sides of the great courtyard in the middle. This compound was a block square. It was a big thing. The common garden backyard was pretty well protected, so there was a good protected outdoor area when we wanted it. One of the requisites for our apartment was that it had to have some outdoor area. We weren't used to being completely shut in.

The streets were just jammed with pushcarts, garbage, cops on horseback, just all kinds of traffic. They were just teeming with life. Of course there was always some kind of a celebration going on. I'll never forget the Fiesta de San Antonio de Padua; that was a big moment in our stay. We had to go and see the festivities. An enormous altar of some kind was erected and blockaded the street. A rope with a pulley was hung from a fire escape on one side to the fire escape on the opposite side of the street. Then someone strung a baby dressed as an angel on the rope and pulled it back and forth. This little red-faced baby flapped its wings. The little kid was supposed to be a cherub flying down to the big statue of the virgin. The virgin was brought in on the shoulders of men. She was on a platform and she was covered with dollar bills that were fluttering

in the breeze. A band was playing, too. Well, of course Jane and I went out to see all of this. I don't remember Mom and Dad going. Well, we got separated. The crowd was jammed in like sardines. This band started to play and of course half of them were drunk. The other half were just cheering and having a wonderful time. In the midst of all this were these little pushcarts and little men trying to sell bananas and other things. Well, I found myself next to a pushcart and the band was right next to me on the other side. I remember the trombone was blasting in my ear just as loud as it could. All of a sudden there was a shot behind the altar across the street. The whole crowd stopped. There was dead silence. Then everybody drew a deep breath, and started screaming, and pushing, and fighting. There was real panic. People wanted to get out.

Jarrell: What happened?

Wyckoff: A man had shot another man in a house right across the street and run out the door. You could hear the shot and see the smoke. This panicked the whole crowd. I felt myself being pushed down under the crowd and I knew I'd be trampled to death. So I crawled under the banana cart. I sat under the banana cart and moved with it wherever it went. It was my protection from this madness. It really was like a stampede. It was a herd of animals just stampeding.

Jarrell: Where was Jane?

Wyckoff: I didn't know. Jane was gone.

Jarrell: She was fending for herself?

Wyckoff: Yes. She was fending for herself. She'd got out. I think what really happened to me was I had on shoes with shoelaces. Somebody was standing on one of the shoelaces and somebody else was pushing me from the otherside. I couldn't pull my other foot over to get up. So I knew I was falling. So I just crawled under the banana cart after that. It saved my life.

Jarrell: Greenwich Village was the acknowledged bohemian center of America at that time, wasn't it?

Wyckoff: Oh yes it was. Everyone wanted to live in the midst of it. Course we lived in a place where we had divine little mama-papa grocery stores and they had heavenly cheeses. I remember the semolina pasta store right across the street. We knew all these people very well because we were there for a year, you know. We really got to know them. We had no furniture in the apartment at all. I know my father went out and bought a barnload of secondhand furniture up in White Plains and brought it down and put it

in the apartment. We just rented a bare apartment. Of course we had to cut on expenses because we were trying to spend all our money on opera and theater tickets. After all, we didn't have very much money. We had a small income. Mother had a little income and my father's salary was very little. A professor's salary was very small in those days. But of course the prices were not so high then, so it wasn't so bad.

Jarrell: Did you all go together to these various theatrical performances?

Wyckoff: No, not all together. For example, Father got three season ticket seats to the Metropolitan Opera and three of us would go. My brother, John, got fed up very shortly with city life. He didn't like it at all. He was too young for it. So he went to school out in East Hampton on Long Island. He came down for the weekends and that sort of thing. So he was out of it as far as all this theatrical and music business was concerned. We really had three seats for four of us. We'd alternate. We went to nearly everything there was to go to.

That year was considered to be a vintage year of the Metropolitan Opera. How we struck it I don't know. Boris Godunoff -- Fyodor Chaliapin and Maria Jeritza performed. We saw singers that were considered to be the greatest in the history of the Metropolitan. We were so lucky.

Jarrell: I'm particularly interested in your experiences and introduction to the Theater Guild in New York. Could you discuss that?

Wyckoff: We weren't fully aware, especially when you're 15 years old, of the historical significance of what's happening around you. We were like little thirsty drunks who were just drinking everything in that we could. We were right next to the Provincetown Theater and handy to all these great shows that were starting. We just simply went to everything we could get into, and could afford. Fortunately my parents decided to spend the money on this. Well, this was the time when Eugene O'Neill's first plays were being shown. Now this was revolutionary.. These plays were very different from what had shown before [in the American theater.] I remember seeing Dreiser's play, a first performance of his The Hand of the Potter in the Provincetown Theater. It was a shaking experience. These were tremendous plays, you know. They were really marvelous. They were commentaries on our own times. These people were considered to be real revolutionaries as far as the drama went. We did see some of the other great classic plays. My mother and father were not particularly seeking them out for us. They were just offering this as part of the total menu.

Jarrell: They wanted you to be exposed to the whole spectrum?

Wyckoff: Yes, to everything.

Jarrell: You said the historical significance and implications of these escaped you at the time...

Wyckoff: They didn't really hit me hard at the time.

Jarrell: You just took it all in?

Wyckoff: Yes, that's right. Well, we were deeply moved by some of them. I was more moved by the modern plays than I was by the old classical plays. They meant more to me. They seemed to arouse my spirits more and made me feel deeply for what they spoke of. The old Shakespeare type things were interesting, too. We had never seen any of the Theater Guild or Provincetown Players productions in Berkeley. The first play I saw of any significance was Shaw's Pygmalion which wasn't much more than a little commentary on life. The plays we saw were plays of the life of the working people. They spoke of the terrible tragedies of some of their lives and how ruthless society was to them. They made a very deep impression on us. As a little child, Mother used to try to protect us from stories that were too emotionally draining for us. She had to stop reading certain books of Dickens because we cried and cried, and cried. Oliver Twist nearly killed us. We were like little blank slates being written on. She knew there were certain things which would disturb us. Some books were political propaganda. We were supposed to take Dickens along with Sir Walter Scott. Well, there's a huge difference you know. Yes.

It was a wonderful year. There weren't just the museums and the bookstores. There were little shops and restaurants. It was the whole business.

Jarrell: What about people? Did you have many friends there?

Wyckoff: Well, we didn't have an awful lots of friends. My father had a lot. He would introduce us to the scholars from Columbia and various other universities around there whom he knew. He was preparing for a trip. He wasn't taking us with him.

UC BERKELEY

Campanile Bells for UCB

There was one trip that he had to make to get the bells for the campanile.

Jarrell: They were going to be cast?

Wyckoff: Yes. He was told to get them in either New York or England or wherever he could find the best bells. He tried to get them in America and he found that no one knew how to make decent bells. So off he went to London, England. That was one trip he took. Then there was a meeting of the World Adult Education Association in Constantinople at Roberts College. Dad wanted very much to go and investigate the Sir Arthur Evans excavations in Crete. I think he was planning that trip at that time. I got his book out to try to get the date straight, but I haven't gotten deep enough into it yet. What I thought I might do is go back to Berkeley to get my chronology straight -- at least to 1929. This approach will give you just a general rundown of those years.

Jarrell: Fine.

Wyckoff: In '21 and '22 we took the trip to New York. I'm going to really enlarge on that a little bit later on. Then in 1922, I entered the University of California, at Berkeley, while living at home. I joined the Gamma Phi Beta House, and tried to make up my mind what kind of courses I wanted to take. I couldn't decide between Architecture, Medicine, and Art, as I remember. So I took all the prerequisites for all of them which was rather difficult 'cause I had to take mathematics, and physics, philosophy and chemistry. I took most of the medical prerequisites in my freshman year. I worked very hard in my freshman year and got straight A's. School was very inspiring because I had some particularly interesting teachers. I thought my chemistry course was one of the most interesting courses I ever took. It was very exciting. But I was stumped to discover that I was not a great mathematician at all. I found it very difficult to take calculus. It didn't work well in my mind at all. Then I began to see that medicine was going to be an awfully long haul. I wasn't at all sure that I wanted to stay that long in school. Soon I began to drift over in the direction of art. Then I thought of architecture and I thought of how interesting that would be. So I took some of the courses that led in that direction. Architecture, I quickly found out, was not what I wanted. My eyes were not strong enough for the drafting work. So I wound up majoring in art. I had a thoroughly satisfying experience studying art. I had Perham Noble and Eugen Neuhaus. The faculty included Stephen Pepper and Lowenberg who were both in philosophy. So I had a thoroughly satisfactory academic side. I finally wound up belonging to the Art Honor Society. On the social side, I became President of my Gamma Phi Beta House. Well, it was a pretty frivolous, wonderful time in a way. Hubert was in the class of the boys who came back from the war ...

Jarrell: That's right. The World War I veterans who enrolled at Berkeley.

Wyckoff: Yes. But there were still a lot of boys at Berkeley when I was there. Hubert and I overlapped by two years even though I never met him in college.

Jarrell: Just in comparing your two experiences you appear to have had an academically and intellectually stimulating time at Berkeley. You had a far better time of it than Mr. Wyckoff did. He thought Berkeley wasn't too valuable an experience. Of course he told me that he just took a lot of French grammar classes, which he enjoyed.

Wyckoff: I think he took some pretty dull stuff. I found it exciting because the implications of the scientific courses I took and the philosophical courses I took together made the whole experience to me one in which I really felt that I was getting some answers. I was quite thrilled with this approach. I think I got as much out of school as my sister Jane did. She had more desire to continue in the academic world than I did.

Artistic Inclination and Pursuits

Wyckoff: When I got through, I wanted to go out and be an artist and do something with my hands and make things. I have a very immediate feeling of that sort and I didn't feel that the academic world, the world of teaching, was for me.

Jarrell: I see.

Wyckoff: I wanted to do more than just criticize or comment or have opinions about all sorts of things. I wanted to do something. Now I did some awfully funny things, come to think of it. You see I would never say "no" if anybody asked me if I could do something. Of course this propensity got me into hot water. When I got out of Berkeley, I did some garden sculpture for various people. One dear old lady had me do all the sculpture for her garden fountain and pools. She finally said, "Can you build a road?" And of course I said, "yes." I had never built a road in my life, but I built her a road. It's still there. I will never forget building that road with a mule and a Fresno scraper and a man who just laughed himself sick at me the whole time. It was a road paved with flagstone. It was a beautiful road, but very bumpy.

Jarrell: This was sort of a landscape architecture job?

Wyckoff: Yes. You could call it that. I was just trying everything.

So college was an exciting time for me and I enjoyed it; it was very stimulating. I went through the usual boy-crazy business that everybody goes through, but survived somehow.

Jarrell: Were you interested at all in anything political?

Wyckoff: No, I wasn't at all. Now that was really curious. I read a lot, of course. There was an old man called Herman Meiling. He was a cripple who sat at Sather Gate and handed out communist literature. He was a fixture and of course people would hoot at him and jeer at him. But at the same time, they missed him when he wasn't there. If he got sick or caught a cold or anything, and wasn't at his post, everybody said, "Well, where's Herman?" They sort of missed him. He was treated sort of like the campus mascot, I think. I remember taking Herman Meiling home in my car in the rain with his bundle of papers to some little boarding house way down near Oakland. I took one of his papers and I read it. Things like the 'new masses' sprung out at me. The language and the whole thing was just silly. The whole thing just seemed idiotic. I just couldn't make any sense out of it at all. I didn't feel a part of "the new masses" at all.

Jarrell: The rhetoric didn't appeal to you at all?

Wyckoff: No, not at all. I did love some of the cartoons though. One cartoon I thought was marvelous. It was a pot with somebody dropping pins into it. The pot was a man's head. I thought that was a delightful cartoon. I remember keeping that one. The idiotic propaganda that people drop into your head -- well, there were several things that happened during that period.

Berkeley Fire of 1923

Wyckoff: In 1923, the Berkeley Fire occurred. That was a really traumatic spectacle. The part of Berkeley, north of the campus, burned. It was a major tragedy in Berkeley. We still had that car we had driven across the continent. It was a great car cause it held a lot of stuff. I remember driving up to Professor George Noyes' house and taking all of his books. Professors were really interesting. The things they thought were precious, were of course what they wanted to save. Noyes was a professor and an expert on Russia. I took his books and loaded my car to the gunwales with them. Then I drove down to Technical High School where they had a book depot. Everybody's books were taken down there. It was really pretty well organized. The owner's name was located with his books.

Well, the fire was moving fast, but I took a second trip. The thing the Noyes wanted to save on the second trip was this gigantic postcard collection. They had filing cabinets full of thousands of postcards and they thought these postcards were more precious than anything else they owned. No clothes, no dishes, no silver, no nothing. Just books and postcards. I thought that was marvelous.

Jarrell: Well, it certainly expresses one's values, doesn't it?

Wyckoff: Yes. Our house turned into a kind of hostel. We were south of the campus, and my mother and father were very active in the rescue arrangements. We had to take in the refugees from the north part of the campus. Our living room was lined with people sleeping on the floors and beds and everywhere. The house was simply jammed from cellar to garret with faculty members. They had only the clothes on their backs with them for the most part. If they had any clothes at all, they weren't anywhere near them; they had been taken somewhere else. The result of this fire was that their clothing was burned. A lot of them were in very bad shape. So Mother, I remember she said, "Well, I'm going to do something about this." She called over to San Francisco to all her rich friends and said, "You clear out your closets and send some good clothes over here right away. We need clothes for the whole faculty." Well, of course this was an emergency and people cooperated. So some extraordinary clothes came over. The men in San Francisco were little fat, round, Jewish people. Then of course we had all of these skinny little college professors. Needless to say, the clothes didn't fit at all. We had racks of clothes. Mother set up these racks and there were two or three big racks that went the full length of the living room. She'd say to these faculty people, "Go pick out something that fits you. Find anything you can." Well, there was one woman, I can't remember her name. Mother said, "Well, she's just the typical faculty wife." And I said, "Well, what does that mean?" Mother was a little snobbish I'm afraid. She said, "Well, she just doesn't have any nice things. She never had anything that she wanted at all. She's always been ground down by that domineering professor of a husband." This woman came out holding this thing on a hanger. She said, "May I have this?" Mother said, "Yes, dear, of course you may. You can have anything you want." It was a sequined evening gown. One of those marvelous flapper gowns.

Jarrell: What workmanship.

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: All those sequins, oh my ...

Wyckoff: Oh, sequins were all over the thing. They were mother-of-pearl, the iridescent kind. The gown looked like a mermaid. She said, "May I have this?" Here she didn't have a thing to wear except an old burned-out gingham dress. So she took the sequined evening gown. I guess Mother persuaded her to take a tweed suit too, but at least she got the sequined evening gown. So that Berkeley fire was an incredible experience. It was really remarkable to see how people rallied and worked together when there was a fire like that. Somehow, some organization always seems to come out of a situation like that. I think we just didn't know where we should go. We just went to the people that we thought might need us. I think there was radio, but you couldn't get the news the way we do now.

Jarrell: It was all by word of mouth?

Wyckoff: Mostly word of mouth and telephones, that sort of thing.

Jarrell: Yes.

FOREIGN TRAVELS: 1925-30

Europe

Wyckoff: In 1925 Mother took Jane and me and we went to Spain. We went for the full summer vacation. We landed in Normandy at Amiens in early, early May. I must have left school early because we got over there when it was just barely the end of spring. We had four months, so it was a long summer. Then we went through France. We explored the whole of the coast of Normandy and Mont St. Michel. We went out and saw the great Bayeux tapestries. Then we went down to Quimper in Brittany and then on down to Spain. Then we gave up the chauffeur. I remember we had a French chauffeur. Mother felt she simply couldn't cope in France without one. But when we got to Spain, I don't know why; nobody had ever heard of a woman traveling alone in Spain, but she wasn't afraid at all. She didn't have the language, but she went down and bought yards and yards of kilometric ticket, which was what you did in those days. You had to say, when you were in Spain, how many miles of ticket you wanted to buy. That's just the way they worked their system. So she bought three yards of the kilometric ticket for each of us to use on the trains of Spain. We got on the train in Biarritz. Then we started for Madrid. Well, in the compartment with us was a man. I think his name was Alfonso Barra. He was a military attaché to the Spanish Embassy in London. Barra was a middle-aged man. I guess he was about 50. Mother was probably about that old then. Barra had a great moustache. It was wonderful. He was very dapper. And he spoke English perfectly with a British accent. Well, he was terribly troubled. He said, "I'm

afraid, Madam, that you are going to cause an international incident, because it is impossible for you to travel in Spain alone with two girls. You cannot do it. It is not done. Nobody does it. You will be taken advantage of, and things will happen that should not happen. It will cause a crisis. I simply must put you under my protection."

Jarrell: Oh! That's true gallantry.

Wyckoff: Well, Mother would pretend she was deaf and couldn't hear. She'd say, "Well, is that so," or, "Thank you." All of this was done in a very offhand way. She was really pushing him away. She had all kinds of notions about what his objectives were. She just wasn't about to accept his advice. Well, it was simply incredible how determined that man was. He was very courteous. He never overstepped the bounds in any way. We finally got to Madrid, and of course when we got off the train, he insisted on taking us to a hotel. He had a home there and had someone meeting him at the train station. Well a family carriage met him, and he insisted that we get in. Things called victorias were what you drove around in. They were beautiful little things, with seats facing each other and were horedrawn. So we were taken to the hotel. This hotel was right smack in the midst of the Puerto del sol which is the noisiest place in the whole of Madrid. A perfectly horrible place to stay. In those days, taxis were very towering affairs. They had horns that went 'Hah, hah, hah, hah'.

Jarrell: (Laughter)

Wyckoff: Such an awful sound -- well, of course Mother couldn't hear them, so she got beautiful rest. Jane and I on the other hand were going nuts. We didn't know about ear plugs in those days, so we really suffered. Well, every single morning at the earliest crack of dawn that man's victoria was out in front of our hotel. We were not allowed out of that hotel unless we went in his victoria. He would take us anywhere, anytime we wanted to go. Well, we were just stuck. We realized that there wasn't anything to do but be graceful about it and accept his generosity. So we were as cool as possible about it. It was very embarrassing for us.

One day Mother said, "Well, I'm sorry. We're leaving town. We're going away." He said, "Well, where are you going?" Mother said, "Well, we're going to Toledo. We want to see the El Grecos there." "Ah fine," he said. "I will arrange things." And so he did. So off we went with him to Toledo. He followed us all through the whole business. Of course Toledo was the most marvelous experience even with old Barra breathing down our necks. Then we went back to our base in Madrid. Mother finally said, "We are going to escape. We've got to get up in the middle of the night and tiptoe

out of the hotel and go to the railroad station. I have arranged with the hotel to have a taxi waiting." I think it was two in the morning when we left. We did manage to escape. We sneaked out and got down to the railroad station and got a train down to Seville. When we got into Seville
...

Jarrell: No!

Wyckoff: No, he wasn't there. He gave up at that point. We didn't tell him where we were going, so he didn't know anything about it. But when we got to Seville, we met some friends from Santa Barbara, the Eastons. They were relatives of the Olneys in Berkeley. There were four girls who were just Jane's and my age, and we made a perfectly charming group of kids. We had a great time together. Seville was the most wonderful place and we stayed a whole month or maybe even six weeks, I've forgotten. It was a long time. We all took dancing lessons using castanets. We went through the whole business. We did learn quite a bit of Spanish there, and of course we had another protector. This time it was a young man who was the official head of the Armstrong Cork Company. He said, "You cannot go alone anywhere. I cannot permit it. It will create an incident. We cannot have an incident."

Jarrell: I love this.

Wyckoff: You cannot believe how naive we were. We had no more knowledge of the culture we were getting into than a child would have had. We weren't aware of the restrictions placed upon women or the over-protective attitude toward young girls.

Jarrell: American women traveling alone ...

Wyckoff: There were just these four girls with their mother. This was, in other words, a total feminine group.

Jarrell: In a Latin country, that is shocking.

Wyckoff: Yes. It was shocking, but not for us. Then we did one thing which was worse than anything we'd done before. Now why we did it, I don't know. It must have just been sheer bad luck ... or good luck, or whatever you want to call it. Everyone of us that year decided we wanted to wear bright colors. Now of course the Spanish women wear black. Everybody wears black the moment they're married. We bought brightly-colored clothes. I had on a hand-loomed suit ... it was red and yellow wool made by a weaver in San Francisco. It was just wonderful. I also had a brown and orange dress. I always loved warm colors. I also had on an orange hat and Jane had a red hat and wore red and white.

Well, it seems that red was the color of the prostitutes of Spain. We, of course, did not know this. Soon people began following us up and down the streets. This soon led to our saying, "Get away!" Well, then they began to murmur sweet nothings. This still happens even to this day. The men following you down the street, muttering all sorts of sweet nothings at you. That was something. At first it scared us and then we thought well this is not bad. This is all right. This is a pretty good life. We sort of thought it was nice. Of course Mother stuck very close to us and we were pretty thoroughly chaperoned everywhere we went. Let me see, we also went from Seville up to Granada. Oh! That Alhambra was so wonderful. The Eastons went up there with us. I remember walking out into dramatic Gypsy quarters and watching the dances in the "Albaicin" by moonlight. Oh, that was so wonderful. The Alhambra just lifted you out of yourself.

The use of water in those gardens was a pure stroke of genius. Being there made you realize the reason the Moors were conquered. The Moors had mastered the art of pleasure in living so completely that they were totally unable to fight. They didn't care about fighting. They simply would not fight. So as a result they were just completely overrun. They had become the victims of their own luxurious living. So after eight centuries, they were driven out of Spain. Their marvelous edifices still remain. The incredible engineering of some of those palaces ...water from a natural spring flowed into a fountain in the center of a courtyard; then it disappeared and reappeared on the balustrades of the stairs. It ran down the balustrades in trickling, lovely little musical sounds. Oh, it was the most charming place. It was a place to get lost in. You could just disappear into heaven. Well, we really enjoyed the Alhambra and stayed quite a long time; thank goodness we didn't have to hurry on this trip. Then we went to Ronda. We went to some of the bullfights and saw some of the fiestas. I never liked bullfights. I did what the Spanish ladies did; I pulled a fan up in front of my face when I didn't want to see the bad part.

Jarrell: This trip to Spain in '25 was before you spent your year in Europe with your father while he took his sabbatical?

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: I didn't realize this.

Wyckoff: Oh yes. This was an earlier trip to Europe. We went to Alicante where my mother ate some fresh, wild strawberries. This put her completely to bed for a month. She was totally knocked out by dysentery. There is nothing more lethal than wild strawberries in Spain. Don't ever eat

them because they'll be the end of you for quite a while. The turista in Mexico is mild compared to the turista in Spain. This turned Jane and me loose in Alicante without a chaperon. Well right away we found ourselves with a protector. It was so funny.

Jarrell: Two beautiful young women, alone ...

Wyckoff: Yes. Well of course we went out. We had such an extraordinary experience. There was a blue pier and a green pier. We didn't know that there was any difference. The piers each had bathing facilities. They looked like little closets with a bench in them.

Jarrell: Little dressing rooms -- cabanas.

Wyckoff: That's right. On the pier was a ladder from each one going down into the water. You had to climb down this ladder to get into the water. The water was about two feet below. Well, Jane and I paid out a little money, took our bathing suits, walked down and got into one of these things. Just as we were undressed and ready to get into our bathing suits, there was a tap on the door. Well, we hurried up and got into our suits and opened the door. There stood a young man. He took his hat off, one of those hard straw boaters, and in perfect English he said, "I beg your pardon, ladies, but I don't think you know where you are." And we said, "Well, where are we?" "Well, you have gone into the wrong pier. You should be in the other pier."

Jarrell: What?

Wyckoff: With that we walked out of the little room and he pulled open a door to reveal a young man sitting and looking into our dressing room as we were getting undressed. In other words, he had paid to watch us get undressed. He had been sitting in the next booth with a little window that we didn't even know was there.

Jarrell: Oh my goodness.

Wyckoff: Well, we were very, very surprised at all this. Actually we thought it was funny, and we were not outraged. We thought it was funny and pitiful. Our new protector in the straw boater it turned out had lived in America a long time. He had been the model for Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney who was a famous sculptress in New York, also a millionaire, and gave a great art museum, The Whitney Museum, to New York City. She did very good bronze sculpture. In the entrance to the Whitney Museum in New York is this man's head.

Jarrell: He was the model for that sculpture?

Wyckoff: Yes. He was the model for a lot of other things she produced. He worked for years in New York as a model for her.

The trip to Spain was wrapped up and we went to Nimes and Arles in France. The great joke was we ran out of money in Nimes. We didn't have a thin dime. Mother's letter of credit didn't come. So there were three women stranded in Europe without a cent. I remember being taken by a Scotsman to the great Roman amphitheater in Nimes to see a movie. We had seen a bullfight there, but not this particular night I'm thinking of. A Scotsman, who wouldn't spend money as a rule, paid five cents to take us to see a Mack Sennett comedy. The comedians were convicts in striped suits in this movie. This Scotsman had no sense of humor whatever. He said at the end of the movie, "My word! Do people dress like that in America?" Well, needless to say, the letter of credit came before we had to wash dishes, and we got home safely.

Mexico

Wyckoff: In 1926 I graduated from the University of California in a class of 2000 or 2200. It was an enormous class. Then I left for La Paz. This was a thing I had long planned to do. My next door neighbors were the Nahls -- Arthur C. Nahl and his wife, Jessica Davis Nahl. He was the brother of Perham Nahl who was the head of the art department at Berkeley and my principal faculty member. Marjorie Nahl is still my very close friend. She was not my age-mate. Marian was my age mate. Marjorie and I were closer friends. We always went with the Nahls to various places. We were just close; we were almost like the same family. Well, Mrs. Arthur C. Nahl and her husband were separated. Mrs. Nahl lived in Berkeley with the children and Arthur C. Nahl was a gold miner down in La Paz. He lived there permanently. They were permanently separated, but not divorced. I think maybe they finally got divorced. Anyway, the children were fond of their father and occasionally went to visit him. La Paz was the world's most remote, and incredibly pioneer community. There was no connection by road or by rail with the outside world. The only way into La Paz was by freighter. I went with Marjorie Nahl down to La Paz on the old steamship, Sinaloa, the last Mexican-owned freighter ever to sail the seas. It took thirty days to get down and thirty days to get back. On the way down we stopped at Ensenada and at Scammon's Lagoon.

Jarrell: Did you see the whales?

Wyckoff: Yes, we actually saw them killing the whales and boiling them down on the decks of the ships. Whale blubber is the world's most horrible-smelling stuff. Our little boat, the Sinaloa, had a cargo of shrimps forward and a

cargo of rawhide aft. We had a Captain Miranda who had a glass eye. I had to sit on the side of the glass eye everyday, to eat. The first mate sat across from me. The first mate and the captain were always kidding each other or making fun of each other. They'd never had two young girls on the boat as passengers before. We were a great audience for them to show off. They had Victrola records of all the Mexican mariachi songs which we didn't like at all. They were always trying to play them for us. The crew were Vera Cruz Indians. They were very musical. There was a great big cage for chickens on the poop deck, and it was overlaid by boards. Everybody would go back to the poop deck in the evenings where the sailors would gather. They would play the guitar and sing. We were their audience. Oh, it was lovely. They sang some beautiful songs. Marjorie spoke very good Spanish and she was able to interpret everything for me. I began to learn to speak Spanish by learning the songs. You really start to learn quickly in a situation like that. One day the flag blew away. We got into a thing called a chabasco which is a terrible wind that blows for three days in one direction. Then there is a thing called a coromuel named after Cromwell. It blows in the other direction. Well when you have a wind blowing three days one way and then five days the other way, the waves become like mountains. This little boat seemed to spend half a day climbing a wave.

Jarrell: What was the size of this boat?

Wyckoff: Well, it was a real, honest-to-God freighter. It wasn't a small thing. I guess it was a couple of hundred feet long. It had four passenger cabins, and of course a captain's cabin. Incidentally, Captain's cabin had little ruffles all around it. He was a great lover of cretonne. He had little pillows covered with rosebuds and ruffles.

Jarrell: How strange.

Wyckoff: We brushed aside the ruffles one time just to look underneath, and found guns. Captain was a gun runner and this is where he kept his guns. This was part of the smuggling operation which of course went on all the time during those days. We didn't say anything about our discovery to anyone, but knew perfectly well what was happening. This was just before the last Mexican revolution.

Those guns were intended for this revolution. As a matter of fact, when we got to La Paz, the revolution broke out. Communication was so bad that we didn't even know. Finally the word got through. There was a British man in La Paz who had some interest there. Mr. Nahl and this man were the only two, oh maybe there were others, in La Paz. The other people there were running the Ruffo Company. Perla de La

Paz was the name of the store; it still is. The Ruffo brothers, who were graduates of Berkeley, were partners with Nahl in various businesses like tanneries. These were business enterprises they had tried to set up down there.

They all got together when the revolution broke out and decided there was only one way to deal with it. And that was to dig a big hole and put all the guns in it until the revolution was over. So they did that. I thought it was really a very neat idea. They made a house-to-house search, got all the guns, and buried them in this huge pit. As a result there was no shooting or disturbance during the revolution while we were there. I don't know what happened afterwards, but the people in La Paz didn't seem to take part in it. Of course these were the large foreign investors who controlled the assets of Mexico. Naturally, the Mexicans didn't like this. I suppose they would have been glad to take over the businesses. They did take things over on the mainland, but not in La Paz.

Wyckoff: The most interesting part of the trip to La Paz -- I was there six months -- was when we went up to Triunfo and saw the ancient gold mines there.

There was one automobile in La Paz. Mr. Nahl had this automobile and drove it about four hundred yards up and down the beach. It couldn't go anywhere else. This automobile was glass-encased. It was called Un Auto de Crystal because it had glass windows running all the way around it. It was in the style of a Model T Ford. The poor automobile could not cope with the desert sand and bumpy roads. It wasn't intended for anything but to demonstrate the there was such a thing as an automobile. Mr. Nahl would put the whole family in this automobile. Any friends we had would hop in, too. At 4:00 o'clock every day we would ride down the Malecon, that's the sea wall, and turn to the right and go exactly a quarter of a mile to the airport. The airport was a mule pasture that was cleared and had a wind sock in it. We would look up at the wind sock every day and say, "I wonder if the around-the-world flyers are going to get lost and land here." Amelia Earhart was making her flights then.

But La Paz had a pearl-diving industry. This was before the pearls were spoiled. I think the pearl oysters were killed by sewage or some kind of pollution. They may have caught a disease, I don't know. Anyway they died out during and after World War II. But there were beautiful pearls to be found there. The Indians were the pearl divers. Mr. Nahl and Henry Ruffo were the two that owned and ran the pearl diving business. Now there were pearl buyers that came from all the world to get these pearls because they were highly prized by the Maharajas of India who paid fabulous sums for them. They were bought through jewelers in Paris. So the Frenchmen would arrive on the freighters and begin looking

for places to stay. Well of course there were no places to stay. There were no hotels. If you were going to stay in La Paz, you either had to stay with Mr. Nahl or Mr. Ruffo or the Englishman. Or if you were rejected by all three, and all the pearl buyers were rejected, then you had to go and get an Indian woman to take you into her cabin. You'd have to pay her, and she usually didn't care about money. So this made things very difficult. They simply didn't set store by money. They set store by respect, dignity, courtesy, food, and by things that could be measured and used. But money didn't count. It didn't mean much because there was so little that you could buy with it. Actually, there was nothing there to buy. A few yards of cotton was about all you could buy. Everything else was traded. Well, anyway, these two pearl buyers arrived during the period I was there.

One who arrived was a very snippy little Frenchman who came with a huge arsenal. He thought he was coming out to the wilds and he was going to hunt. He brought a car along but only got about a half a mile out of town when it broke down. But he had all these guns. And he wore sporting jackets and swaggered around. Of course everybody knew that the Indians would completely reject him. Sure enough, he had an awful time. The woman whose house he was finally taken into got sick and he did not treat her with respect. All the Indians heard about that! Meanwhile there was a great pearl discovered. This little Frenchman wanted to get that pearl. There was another man called Palache who was a Turk. He was a very homely man, very fat, and had no hair on his head. He also had very bad teeth. But Palache was a nice man. He was courteous and understood the Indians. He knew how to deal with them. He treated them with respect. Palache went and stayed with an Indian woman in her little hut and he listened to her stories. Mr. Nahl would invite him out to dinner at our house a number of times. The other man was never invited. This infuriated him even more. Well, the great day came when Palache got the pearl. He paid a fabulous price for it. It was a pearl drop that was to fit on the forehead of the Maharanee. We saw this thing. It was a black pearl. It was just fabulous. The color was like a peacock's tail. You know, the eye in the peacock feather, that green highlight?

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: Well, it was a pearl with that marvelous green highlight on it. So I said to Palache, "Well, what are you going to do with it? Are you going to put it in your pocket and leave?" "No," he said, "I would never dare do that. I'd be killed if I did. I'll just send it by regular mail. That's the only way." The regular mail went out of that place in sacks on the heads of cargadors. They waded out, put the mail on barges, and then it was transferred to a

boat that came once every thirty days. That pearl could have been anywhere in those sacks.

Jarrell: Oh my God.

Wyckoff: He said, "It's insured. That's the only way I'll get it home safely." While Palache was in La Paz, Marjorie and I were invited by Mr. Nahl and Henry Ruffo to go out with the Indians on a pearl-diving expedition. The Indians said they would give us the catch in the morning. Well, it was a great honor. They made a good catch that particular morning. So we were given the pearls. I got three big pearls about the size of a green pea. They were black pearls. There were also two little pearls. I had a stud made for Hubert and a stud made for my father and I had a ring made for myself with the three pearls. Palache saw those pearls, and he said, "Those are pretty good pearls, they're all right." So I was very pleased to hear that. But that's all I knew. When I came home from La Paz, I had those three pearls made into a ring. I wore the ring to Europe when we travelled there in 1929. When we got to Cologne, I went swimming and I left that pearl ring in my suitcase, in the little side pocket, and it was stolen. I didn't realize it was stolen until we left Cologne. Apparently a maid had gone through my things and had stolen it. Well, I didn't do anything about it for a long time. We had baggage insurance though, Lloyds of London, so I wrote. They said they couldn't do anything about it unless I had a jeweler's receipt to show how expensive the pearl was. Well of course there was no jeweler's receipt, because

...

Jarrell: Well, you had the pearls made into a ring.

Wyckoff: I had, but I hadn't bought the pearls you see. I had taken the pearls to Shreves [jewelers]. They wouldn't estimate the value of the pearls for me. I finally remembered Palache, but I didn't know where he was. So I wrote somebody and he said that Palache worked for Moscowitz in Paris. So I wrote there and asked if he'd be willing to say something about the pearls to the insurance company. Palache wrote a letter to the insurance company and I got two thousand dollars.

Jarrell: Two thousand dollars for those pearls? How wonderful.

Wyckoff: It enabled us to stay two more months in Europe. It was really great.

Jarrell: Amazing.

Wyckoff: Well, on the boat coming back to California from La Paz I contracted malaria I almost died. Palache it

turned out was not only a pearl buyer, but happened to be a pharmacist as well. He was on the boat coming back. He got on in San Jose del Cabo which was about a week after I had got on. I came down with malaria before he boarded and I became extremely sick. Of course the specific cure for malaria is quinine, and he had it. Palache was able to give me the medicine I needed. I think I would have died if he hadn't gotten on that boat and saved my life. So I really owe him a great debt of gratitude in a number of ways. Well I came back and Hubert had condemned the Sinaloa as unseaworthy when it started out.

Jarrell: I didn't realize, to tell you the truth, that you knew him then.

Wyckoff: Yes, he came down to see me off.

Jarrell: When did you meet him?

Wyckoff: In 1926.

Jarrell: You never knew him when he was at UC, is that right?

Wyckoff: No, I met him in 1926, just about the time I graduated. I only knew him casually then. He was in the United States Attorney's Office then, and had charge of ships and their licensing. His office had control over the Sinaloa and they said that it was unseaworthy. Oh, it was a great ship. The last time I discovered that ship, it was still plying the waters between the Gold Coast and London. Why it was a marvelous ship. It was built to withstand terrific storms. It rode low in the water. The whole ship would go under water and come up. It was well-balanced. We did lose some deck cargo now and then, but ...

Jarrell: But everyone loses a little cargo ...

Wyckoff: God, what a great ship that was the Sinaloa. If I could afford it, I'd buy it. It was a beautiful ship. Well, that's where I learned to love freighters. I wouldn't want to travel on anything but a freighter. You get to the point on a freighter where you never want to leave it. That's the real danger. You become mesmerized by it. There's something so great about not having all the decisions to make that you have to make on the mainland. It's so great to be out there on your own little floating world. The decisions are simple and you have time to think and time to do the things that seem really important. I hated to get off. I felt very close to the sea. There's something so exciting about going through a storm. I really enjoy a storm at sea. I never have been too terrified of them even though there have been some pretty scary times. Well, Hubert feels the same way. I was so happy to get him

on a freighter to Europe because he'd never been to sea until long after we were married. In 1952, I finally persuaded him to go to Europe on a freighter ... I said to him, "Now I want you to come home on a first-class liner so you'll notice the difference. You'll never want to go on a liner again. Will you do it?" Well, of course, this all cost a lot of money. He said finally, "Well, I guess I ought to do it just once for the experience." So we came back on the U.S.S. Constitution -- one of the huge liners. It was a revolting development. We didn't like it half as much as on the little freighter where we lost half a deck cargo in a real whopping storm en route to Liverpool. Hubert never gets seasick. He is a very good sailor.

Well then I came back to Berkeley and started doing sculpting. I worked at this all during 1928. Then in 1929, we started on the big trip to Europe. When we got back from that, I got married.

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Jarrell: So you went to the School of Fine Arts and then went to Europe the next year?

Wyckoff: Yes. I was at the School of Fine Arts for a while, 1928. I went to this School of Fine arts where I met a lot of my old friends. A lot of us who graduated from the University of California's Department of Art continued our work afterward. We were all dying to get our fingers in the mud and do things. We missed the craft side of so many of the things that we wanted to do, so it was a great pleasure to go and work at the School of Fine Arts in San Francisco or the School of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. It was at the School of Arts and Crafts I made that bed you were interested in. I made that in contemplation of marriage.

Jarrell: I didn't know you made that bed.

Wyckoff: I was always passionately interested in woodcarving and woodworking. I always liked to work with my hands. I think I inherited that from that old ancestor who chopped down the primeval forest and settled in America. I also started doing landscape designing for gardens with my sculpture as the center of attraction somewhere in the garden. I made ceramic fountains and various other pieces. I had brought back with me from Spain a great love of beautiful gardens. I was impressed by the tiles and the ceramics and the wonderful things the Moors created. I was inspired by all of this. I set up this relationship with Mr. Bragdon who ran the California Farence Company. It was down on Hearst Avenue. We worked together on things like creating the design for a whole fountain. I would do the tiles and the sculptured parts. He also was working on San Simeon, creating great tiles for Julia Morgan. It was quite

a big operation down there. But he and I were very close and worked hard on these things. It was great fun. I earned a little money, very little, but enough to make me feel very independent.

Than came another great sabbatical year for my father. We decided to go as a family to Europe. I had been contemplating getting married to Hubert at that time. But we were thinking it over; we thought it over for five years. We were very deliberate.

Jarrell: Wonderful.

Wyckoff: I went away for 14 months in the midst of the five years to think even harder whether I wanted to do this.

EUROPEAN TRIP 1929-30

Wyckoff: Father's sabbatical year in 1929-30 coincided with the Crash [of the stockmarket]. Being of another world, we weren't aware of the crash. We were not stockholders in the stock market. We had never been that kind of people. Our incomes were all from little ancestral pieces of property that had been handed down through the years and were not particularly affected right away by the stock market crash. So we weren't aware of all this and went sailing blithely off to Europe. We spend 14 months over there. We sailed on the Hamburg-American Line and took a little Ford automobile, a Model A, with us.

Jarrell: Oh, my goodness.

Wyckoff: The voyage took 31 days. It was a nice, long, leisurely voyage during which we stopped at all sorts of ports. We got off and explored San Salvador and the Panama Canal and various other places. We finally landed in Bremen. The ship's doctor, his name was Othmar Oeschey, was in charge of a very large psychiatric unit in Luneberg, Germany.

Jarrell: He was a passenger?

Wyckoff: He was the ship's doctor taking vacation.

Jarrell: Oh.

Wyckoff: Doctors frequently did this in Germany when they needed a vacation and were completely exhausted. They'd sail as a ship's doctor, because there was very little to do. They just checked people's immunization papers and did a few little band-aid routines. It was a nice vacation for them.

Well, we got acquainted with this young man who was a very intellectual man. He was very typically German in his responses to the peculiar gloomy culture that they had. His views sprang from Oswald Spengler and the people of Munich. Anyway, he was an introduction to this cyclical attitude on history. Later on, when I got to Munich, I did a portrait of him which is in this book.

Jarrell: This is clay?

Wyckoff: Yes. That's his portrait. I think he's in the pictures here. These are earlier things. I didn't do him until later on in the trip. At any rate, we sailed, landed in Bremen, and drove in our little putt-putt car down the Rhine. It was in Cologne during this trip down the Rhine that my La Paz pearl ring was stolen. We went across the Alps to Salzburg, and then down the Dolomiten strasse to Florence. While we were there, we lived in Leonard Bacon's villa which was called Villa Sassetta. It was a 22-room medieval, or renaissance villa. It was the most beautiful place you could imagine. There was a terraced garden looking down over the city of Florence. It was on the road to Fiesole at number 72 Via Bolognese. Here are some pictures of the garden. This is just one terrace of the garden. There were about 7 terraces, I think.

Jarrell: It looks like out of a movie set.

Wyckoff: Oh, it was just a gorgeous place. It was staffed with a tremendous number of servants. The life style and home were so incredibly different from a small professor's little shingled home in Berkeley. You couldn't imagine the contrast. People were waiting on us hand and foot.

Jarrell: Who paid the servants? They just came with the house?

Wyckoff: They belonged to Leonard Bacon. He had inherited a lot of Venezuelan oil. He was a professor of English from the University of California at Berkeley. Some ancestor of his had invested in Venezuelan oil and all of a sudden it came in. Instead of teaching, Leonard went to live in Florence as an ex-patriot, writing, and doing things that he wanted to do in a very leisurely style. But like all ex-patriots, he got homesick. He wanted to go back to Berkeley, where he had been challenged. This is why we traded houses. So he came to live in our house in Berkeley, which had only 11 rooms, and we went to his house which had 22 bedrooms. We couldn't fill them up, to say the least. In fact, we closed off all of the house except for three bedrooms and the downstairs. Mother and Father really loved it for a while. It was surprising how quickly it palled on them. My brother was simply bored stiff. He couldn't stand the life. To him it was awful. He was a youngster, about

15 or 16, and this was deadly for him. Father and Mother were marvelous though. They decided that the family should break up. We'd each go our own way and do what we wanted. Mother and Father wanted to take the car and leisurely go through the hill towns of Italy. My brother wanted to go to the sea shore and do nothing but just swim and lie in the sun. Jane and I wanted to stay in the Villa. We loved it. We thought it was great. Furthermore, we had all sorts of ideas of how we'd like to entertain there. We were just delighted with the whole thing. Well, to our amazement, I still don't know how it ever happened, Mother and Father were willing to leave us, without a chaperon in that huge villa. They trusted us to our own common sense to take care of things properly. We were not to get into scandalous troubles of any kind. We were to behave ourselves.

Jarrell: I'm sure this estate was filled with all kinds of antiques.

Wyckoff: It was a marvelous place. There were all sorts of 14th century Renaissance antiques.

Jarrell: And you two were responsible for this place?

Wyckoff: Well, there were servants. They were responsible to the Bacons. We really weren't in charge at all. The majordomo ran the place. But this was what was so interesting. My mother and father said, "We have this much money. We will simply divide it up among all of us. Everybody will get an equal share of the income and you'll have to learn to manage on what you have."

Jarrell: This would be for how long of a period?

Wyckoff: Until we met again. We were put on a monthly allowance for the whole 14 months. We each had \$150 a month for the whole trip. I think that was the sum total of the money we had. In those days, you could live on that small amount of money in Europe, especially if you were living the life of a remittance woman from England. They were often told to live in a cheap pensione (a small hotel) and stay away from the family and not annoy them. We found a lot of places that were filled with old ladies who were living in this fashion. What we would do would be to save our money up and live very penitently in one place and then just go and blow it in the next place and have a wonderful time traveling around together. We stayed in the villa in Florence for quite a long time; quite a bit longer than the others. We stayed clear through the summer and into the fall. We entertained a great deal. We met exciting, interesting people in Florence and had a glorious time. There was a very interesting group of people that lived around this villa.

Jarrell: Your neighbors?

Wyckoff: Yes. The villa was one of five that surrounded a little valley. In the valley was a common farm which supplied all the vegetables for the five villas. Maybe two families operated this garden and did all of the necessary work. There was also a tennis court and a swimming pool and many glorious terraces.

Directly across from us was Lord Acton's place. His son, Harold Acton,, was a collector of antiques, shall we say. He also collected ladies. He gave parties that were unbelievable. Next to him was "Heinie" Faust. Max Brand and I don't know how many other pen names also lived there. I think there were seven pen names in all. Heinie and his wife and children lived right next to Acton. We all became very close friends. The Hazzards from New England lived further around the circle. They were north of us. Then to the south of us was the Keppel place. I think his name was Edward Keppel. I have a picture of him. He was a fascinating example of an old European custom that is just incredible. Mr. Keppel's wife, Alice Keppel, was King Edward VII's mistress. Alice Keppel was married to Edward Keppel who accepted the arrangement for quite a few years. Well, it was a happy marriage, believe it or not. The husband put up with it as a loyal subject of his king. This is the kind of thing that you just would never dream of happening in this country.

They had a glorious estate with a huge swimming pool where we would go swimming. Jane and I were invited to go swimming. Mr. Keppel was a very friendly old boy and he liked pretty girls and he liked to have them come swim; so we came. The Keppels entertained royalty because everybody's related in the world of royalty. One day, Jane and I were in the pool, and all of a sudden Mr. Keppel came running out, and said, "You must get out of the pool. The Queen of Greece is here, and she is coming down the path, and you must not be dressed like this. You must clothe yourself somehow. I would like to have you meet the princess. She's charming; she's your age, and I'd like very much to have you meet her. So, why don't you just quickly get dressed." Well, we couldn't quickly get dressed. We didn't have anything to wear. We had walked over in our bathing suits, didn't have any clothes. "Well," he said, "here, take this. Take my bathrobe." He was a six-foot tall man. There was a little bathing house full of his enormous bathrobes and size 12 bedslippers. So we put these incredible outfits on. And with this done, the Queen walked down the path. She had the face of Kaiser Wilhelm. Her face was absolutely rock-like. There was no humor; just the face of a power-complex walking down the path. Keppel told us we had to curtsy.

Jarrell: In those bathrobes?

Wyckoff: Yes. So we stepped back, pulled up the bathrobe, stuck out the great pantoufles and made a low curtsy. The Queen bowed her head. I guess she didn't see how we were clothed or pay any attention to us at all. She just sailed right on by. The little princess came along afterwards and she could hardly contain herself. She became a very nice friend of ours and we learned a lot about the terribly restricted life of a little princess. It was quite a lesson in the kind of culture that we knew nothing about.

Well, we met some very interesting people there. Heinie, of course, watched over us. I had an accident as I was running to catch the little "tranvia" (tram). It's a streetcar, somewhat like a San Francisco cable car, which ran up the Via Bolognese all the way up to Fiesole. Up Fiesole there was a colony of artists. One of these artist friends of ours was giving a luncheon party and invited us to come. Jane and I were running down the path to catch the streetcar up to Fiesole and I fell. When I fell, I cut my knee on a jagged piece of rock, a step. It cut the ligament from the bone right under the kneecap. We all have two little bones, one is the kneecap and the other is a little bone right under it. I had a cut about an inch deep and it was filled full of gravel. Well I wanted to go to this party. I wasn't about to give in to any nonsense like this. But I knew I had to do something. So I remember running back into the house. The maid was there and I said, "Have you got some alcohol?" And she said, "No." "Well," I said, "give me a bottle of whiskey." I took the bottle of whiskey and poured it over my knee and just wrapped a handkerchief around it. It hurt like sixty, but I ran down the hill, got on the streetcar and went up to the party. I said, "I think I'd like a martini." I remember saying that. So they handed me a martini. I sat down and sat through lunch. Then I kept feeling my shoe squishing. I looked down and realized my shoe was full of blood. I had a real honest-to-God hemorrhage going in my leg. And I have always been very light-headed. So I fainted dead away right there in the middle of the luncheon. Out cold as a trout. The next thing I knew, some giant was carrying me in his arms and I was going through a cool doorway into something.

I didn't know where I was ... and there were a group of nuns around, speaking very softly and comfortingly to me ... and I was spread out on the bed. Somebody came in with a probe and started opening up my leg. And [I found out] that the man who brought me was Max Ernst, the painter. He carried me down the road to the convent. He took me there to get my leg fixed. And ... can you imagine that! My leg swelled up and it was looking very dangerous. So I was taken home and put to bed. Told not to move. This was before the days of antibiotics.

Jarrell: You were taken to the villa?

Wyckoff: Yes, to the villa. Jane and I had an incredible bedroom; it was as big as a ballroom. The bed was on a dais ... you had to take two steps up to the bed, and it had a canopy over it of course with all the usual great draperies and fixings. And it had balconies all the way around it. The furniture was very Renaissance, but it had a neo-classical Napoleonic look to it ... Yes, it was regal stuff. Great black marble-top things all over the place. Anyway, I was stuck in this bedroom for almost a month ... a long time. I had an Italian doctor who came down and put some iodine in the cut. He probed around, pulled out a couple of rocks and then sewed it up. And the thing swelled up. We didn't have antibiotics then as I said. It was infected ... dreadfully. And Heinie, whom I did not know at that time, heard about us. He was Leonard's great sidekick, and he felt sort of responsible for anybody staying in Leonard's house. Of course, he'd been a student at Berkeley. Heinie decided that he had to take charge. And the maid came fluttering in and she said, "Mr. Faust's here." "Well," I said, "all right. Mr. Faust can come in." With that, she opened the door and in walzed a gigantic St. Bernard dog. Well I thought, what's this? The biggest one I've ever seen. And then in walked another one, even bigger. And then in walked Heinie Faust. A great, tall, hulk of a man, you know. Just huge. He said, "What are you doing here ... sick in bed with a poisoned leg?" "Well," I said, "I'm getting tender, loving care from these people, and I'm very grateful for it." "Well," he said, "I'm going to fire everybody. I'm in charge." With that he fired the Italian doctor and brought in an American doctor who opened up my leg and found a huge pocket of pus in there. It was just awful. The American doctor said, "Now you're going to have to really have some extended care here and very careful nursing or you're going to lose your leg. And you don't want to do that. 'Cause there were big red streaks you know.

Jarrell: Blood poisoning.

Wyckoff: Yes. Very bad. And he said, "You've got to do this with compresses" and all kinds of things. So ...

Jarrell: But that was serious in those days, wasn't it with no antibiotics?

Wyckoff: Yes. It was very serious. So, I can remember lying in bed with great tubs of hot epsom salts solution, with compresses that had to be changed all day, and most of the night. My sister was just wonderful through this; she had boyfriends and was very solicitous of me and wanted to bring people to entertain me. And she would go out and get orchestras and boyfriends and all kinds of people to come in

and amuse me. Every night at 5 o'clock, there must have been 30 people in that bedroom. And we supplied liquor and all sorts of good stuff for them -- that's where all our money went.

Jarrell: What an incredible life you were living.

Wyckoff: Yes, we just lived the life of Riley. Well, what happened in the summertime was that all the women and children [would] go to the beach and leave the men behind to earn the money. Since they [were] bored and [had] nothing to do, they would come up to the villa. They'd say, "There's an American with a nice place. Let's all go [visit]. Then Heinie would preside over all this or old man Acton would come and preside."

Jarrell: You were just lying like a queen in state.

Wyckoff: Yes. That's right. Well, I couldn't get down to the living room. I had to stay there. So they all came up to my room. Well, it was an incredible life. You just can't imagine. It's one of those things you look back on and say it must have been a dream, it didn't [really] happen. In that way [though] we met a lot of fascinating people. After a while I got well enough so I could get around. Then we went over to Rapallo and stayed at the beach a little while there. That was where Ezra Pound lived. And we got to know him. We went to stay at Zoagli at Maude North's little cottage. Miss Maude North was the sister of Arthur North who was, I believe, at the University for a long time and was quite a close, old friend of my father. He also had a letter of introduction to a Professor Saviotti who taught at the University at Genoa. And they had a place at Rapallo. Tonino Saviotti took me out a lot and we had a lot of fun playing tennis, swimming, and boating. Yes.. He was really fine.

So then [my] parents [came back] and decided that they wanted to go to Greece, [but] I wouldn't go. Anyway, came the wintertime, and the question was, what to do. Jane decided to go with the family to Greece; I wanted to go to Hans Hoffman's art school in Munich. So, I went and arrangements were made for me to live in Munich in a home with a painter named Hans De Fregger who was a third-generation genre painter -- paintings with those little kitchens with pots and pans and with the women cooking.

Jarrell: Really, in this time of experimentalism?

Wyckoff: Yes, he was the old style. He had a large home full of lots of paintings. It was a family that had been artists for that many generations. They were also the intellectual leaders of their little group there. Every week they would have salons; a group of people gathered

together to discuss the philosophical problems of the day and the political problems and the economic problems. Now this was 1930; '30-'31 ... it was that winter.

Jarrell: Things were pretty grim.

Wyckoff: Yes. Hitler was on the rise. There was a jugend bewegung they called it -- a youth movement [made up of] unemployed kids who banded together and drifted up and down the country, many of whom were the followers and the disseminators of a lot of Hitler's ideas. They had a mass meeting one time in Stadtrosenheim and the De Freggers thought that I should go and hear Hitler. They were extremely sad, suspicious, and unhappy about him; they were not sympathetic towards him. Spengler was there quite often, and he was just suffused with gloom over the whole thing that he saw ahead. Of course his book had been written.

Jarrell: Right.

Wyckoff: Untergang des Abendlandes (The Decline of the West). And he felt that this was going to be the doom of the entire Western civilization. So I went and heard Hitler and Rosenberg, I think Rosenberg was the eloquent one whom all the students and the young people cheered. Hitler was funny ... he had a high, little, squeaky voice and certainly had no charisma at all. I had thought that he would have [since] he had this following. But he didn't. He was rather repulsive really.

Jarrell: Did you think this at the time?

Wyckoff: Well, yes. I thought he was an insignificant person compared with his front men who were putting up a great show. Of course I was very impressionable. I had heard the discussions. One of the interesting people there was Putsy Hanfstaengl. I did a portrait of him too. Now he gave another aspect of Hitler. He was a Harvard graduate and was supposed to be the great link between America and Hitler. He was the close associate kind of person who would interpret America [for Hitler]. Why he fell for him I'll never know. So that was an interesting experience. We didn't see the political significance in terms of the agony that lay ahead at all. In Italy we just thought it was a bunch of chocolate soldiers parading.

Jarrell: But when you went to the discussion groups in Germany, the weekly salons where people would be talking ...

Wyckoff: Well that was later.

Jarrell: Were you starting to get a sense of the seriousness of your German friends, these intellectuals ...

Wyckoff: Yes. We were impressed with the gloom they had ... very definitely. Or I was. None of the rest of the family were there. I was alone there. I had a very deep impression of the gloom that was just permeating that whole society. I never want to go back to Germany again, never. I have no desire to go to Germany at all. No, I went through that whole German thing and it just ... well, finished me off, as far as ... and yet I had some very wonderful friends there. They were really great. I learned to ski. I went to St. Moritz ... the Pixis family took me up there. And I went to live in some of the cutest, little, tiny Swiss villages like Berorang near Kitzbuhl. Where we'd live in a house with one little room that was very tiny, all scrubbed and holy stoned and underneath the room keeping it warm was a cow; the cow manure steamed and that kept the room warm. That was the way some of those Swiss farmers lived. And that's the way you went skiing; that was the ski lodge. I also stayed at St. Moritz at the great hotel there. We had skiing lessons every day for one month, from the greatest ski teacher there whose theory was: when you learn to ski with me, you never fall down. That was true; you never did because they never allowed you to fall down. Since there were all these very brittle, old ladies who were very delicate you couldn't afford to let them.

Then we went back to Paris. Among the artist colony in Munich, I [met] a man called Ludwig Grossman ... and it's his pictures I have all over the house here. Ludwig Grossman had been in the first World War and had been in a prison camp and that's where he started painting. He was Jewish ... it's rare that you find Jewish painters. Anyway, Jane came back from Greece and joined me. Mother and Dad went home. They put Jane in a French family to go to school in Paris for another six months or a year; I stayed on for a little while and then came home.

Before this we went together down to Vouvray. This was during one of the periods where we had spent all our money in Paris and we did not have a thin dime. We had to wait until the check came in from the next month, you see. So what to do. We decided that we would go and work on a farm. Can you imagine anything to equal that. So we asked around the cafes of Paris and different places. We were so naive. You can't imagine. And then Ray suddenly appeared ... that is, Ludwig Grossman ... we called him Ray. He suddenly appeared and he said that he had an old friend ... an old woman down in Vouvray and he was sure she would take us in and go through the motions of giving us work in exchange for our room and board.

So we went down to Vouvray and here was this marvelous little farm. It was a house built on the edge of the Isse, not the Loire ... maybe it was the Loire ... anyway it was where the Loire and the Isse came together.. There had once

been a ferry, and this was the ferry building ... a tiny, little box of a building right on the edge of the river with a big room with a great fireplace downstairs. And upstairs, our bedroom which had been the bedroom of the five sons of Monsieur and Madame Garant. All five of their sons had been killed in the war. The bitterness was so unbelievable that ... it was just such a heartbreaking thing. All their children's things were up there and here we came. This elderly couple just tottering on to the end of life and just as bitter as could be. Well, anyway, Madame Garand was wonderful to us. She was a marvelous cook, marvelous. I learned a few things from her about cooking. Anyway, we worked. We gathered snails (escargot) in the ditch. We picked tendrils of vines to wrap grape leaves around things to make goodies for dinner. She supervised us. We worked in the vineyards a little bit. We were so useless, it was just incredible. In the photograph of Jane doing the laundry she's sitting in a boat with a great big scrubbing board across and the laundry there. All the sheets were handloomed linen. You went out in the river and soaped and rubbed your laundry and beat it with sticks; you rinsed it in the river; then you squeezed it; then you brought it back and spread it on the grass to bleach it in the sun. That's how you did your laundry.

We lived there for a month or two. It was a marvelous experience; we just had a wonderful time there. We did a little painting and just thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and drank that marvelous wine.

Downstairs the old men from the farms around there would come together every night to play dominoes ... usually old French peasants. They drank a thing called "petitspernod." Pernod is absinthe. We had never tasted it before.

Jarrell: The real thing. Absinthe has now been outlawed?

Wyckoff: Well we didn't know that. And of course we wondered what happened to us. We would take a thimble of this and then you became a floating torso. We would float up to bed. I remember this stuff was incredible. But they drank it every night and they seemed to be able to function. So I guess it's possible to do it without becoming an addict.

Anyway, we went back years later to see Madame Garand's place. And there were some awfully funny things that happened there. For example there was one telephone in the whole town. When ever anybody got a call on that telephone the whole town came to hear what it was. No, they just stood in a crowd outside on the street. They'd say, "Who is it?" "What did he say?" "What does he want?" "Who's alive?" "Who's dead?" "What's happening?"

Jarrell: A major event.

Wyckoff: A major event. Well, of course, you might know that the idiotic thing that happened to us was that some boyfriend that we'd picked up in Italy decided he wanted to call us and he heard we were in Vouvray. Since he was jealous he called. Well, we decided that since the townspeople had gathered around, we were going to give them a thrill. So we pretended that instead of it being the boyfriend, that it was the King of Italy. So we carried on this conversation. Of course he couldn't make out what we were talking about, but we didn't care; we were just giving them their money's worth. So we had a great time over that. Oh, it was a silly joke to play.

Jarrell: It seems as if you were living in a bubble in a certain way.

Wyckoff: Well, that's it; we were just living in a bubble. Of course, we did have the marvelous experience of being in Paris in the days when Hemingway and all the incredible Gertrude Stein crowd and everybody were there in their lush days; we met a lot of fascinating people and saw life in a way that ...

I went to art school there too. We always lived at the Hotel Danube; for three generations we have lived in that hotel on the Rue Jacob right around the corner from the Saint-Germain-des-Pres ... you could throw a stone at it. On the Rue Jacob right near the Université.

Marriage, 1931

Well, okay, I came home then and got married in 1931, September 16th and moved to 1059 Broadway [in San Francisco].

Jarrell: Well that was a quick transition there.

Wyckoff: Very quick. Very quick. We came home. Hubert came to Reno to meet my train. His mother gave him the car and she said, "Now you just have to promise me that you won't elope." He drove me home from Reno so we could have a nice long talk about whether we were going to get married or not. I remember he said, "My mother made me promise not to elope." We were the first wedding in the family, in both families, in our generation ... and we knew as well as anybody, that weddings are not for the people who get married; they're for the families and for the mamas and papas whose hearts have been waiting for this all these years. Our families didn't know each other until we became acquainted. But they became devoted to each other during the 5 years before we were married. In fact, I'm quite sure they were both very eager that we get married. They were

tired of waiting around and wished we'd hurry up and get married. So when we got married, it was a very happy event all around. I had a marvelous relationship with my mother-in-law; and Hubert had a marvelous relationship with his mother-in-law. So we didn't have any of those classic jokes about hating your mother-in-law. Everybody got along beautifully well; it was a very happy family relationship. The brothers and sisters were all close friends. My sister and Hubert's brother were always dating each other and having a great time. It was a really harmonious relationship. The wedding was in the Episcopal Church. I was a Congregationalist, but I was willing to get married in the Episcopal Church. I had been baptized a Congregationalist and Hubert's mother was terribly worried for fear I hadn't been baptized because the Episcopal high church people took this seriously. So I finally satisfied them that I was a Christian and they let me into their church to get married. So we had a wonderful little ceremony up there in St. Clements Church at Berkeley. We had a reception at the house afterwards. And then we went over to 1059 Broadway in this old car. And of course there was the usual joke. We got down to the ferry -- you had to take an auto-ferry to get your car across the bay -- when all of sudden there was a lot of honking behind us and we didn't know what on earth it was. It was Hubert's younger brother Bud. He said, "Hey, you forgot your toothbrush." Well, we forgot all our luggage; we didn't have any of it with us. We were just wandering along in a stupor.

Now Hubert had been in the United States Attorney's Office where he had been earning \$333.33 a month. Then he resigned just when we got married and we were out on the street with nothing; [we had] no income at all, except what he earned.

Jarrell: Well, he had just started his practice, that's right.

Wyckoff: Yes. Alone. He didn't have any clients to speak of and things were very uncertain. And then a dear old man ... I guess he told you about Elliott McAllister, Sr., a San Francisco lawyer.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: Well, he turned over his practice to Hubert. He was about to die of cancer and he called him in and turned over his practice to him. And that helped Hubert a lot. His income was of course irregular but it amounted to about \$500.00 a month. Anyway, we were able to live. But of course you have to realize what the prices were in those days. You could get a 5-course dinner for 50 cents with wine thrown in in North Beach in those days. That was something. Prices were low.

THE DEPRESSION YEARS: COMING OF AGE

Wyckoff: Well, my marriage plunged me into a situation that was so totally different from what it was in Europe or even before that. And of course the Depression had no meaning to me till I got there. Then it came over me in such a dramatic way that it just wrenched my heart to see the suffering; to see the awful things that were occurring. There were children, really, there were children abandoned who were living in big concrete pipes in vacant lots. I remember that.

Jarrell: Now how did you know this? Here you'd just come back ...

Wyckoff: Bess Livermore was the school attendance officer and she lived next door to us in San Francisco you see. She would come home and say, "You wouldn't believe what is in the lot down at so and so." And I would go down and look, and sure enough, here was a great concrete culvert with a bunch of children living in it. It was incredible to me what was happening.

Jarrell: Since we're starting to talk about a new era here ... you'd just come home from Europe?

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: From this bubble, from this incredible experience?

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: You'd gotten married.

Wyckoff: Yes. I know. I had been living in a Renaissance villa in Florence.

Jarrell: Right.

Wyckoff: And all of a sudden I came home and ... well, for example ... my mother [owned] a warehouse on the corner of Jessie and New Anthony Street which was just a block from the Palace Hotel. Right east of the Railway Express Office was a narrow alley which nowadays you'd say, well, this is where the bums and drunks go and throw their bottles away and pass out on the sidewalk ... that sort of thing. It was that kind of a part of town.

Anyway, it was a 4-story warehouse. Mother said, "Well, I can't rent it and why don't you use it for a studio?" because I wanted a studio in San Francisco. Well, the rooms were [about] 30' x 100' or 100' x 100' -- they were enormous rooms, no partitions, with posts holding up the building. There was an old elevator with a rope; you'd pull and the

thing would go up and then you'd hang on the rope and it would stop. Anyway, it was sunny, had beautiful great windows on two sides south and west. It was not dank. It was really a great place. So I took the top floor which was the warmest because the heat rose.

To get there everyday, I had to pass through a breadline; there was a soup kitchen run by a charity. I went down this alley, turned the corner, and there was this soup kitchen. This astounded me to see these faces of people looking so hopeless and so bedraggled, standing there. And of course it's bound to have an effect on somebody. And finally, one man whom I saw standing there ... I just impulsively walked up to this man who was standing there with one of these carpenter's tool boxes in his hands ... and I said, "Are you a carpenter?" And he gave me this vague smile and great big eyes and said, "Well, you could say so." And I said, "Would you build me a table?" "Why, yes," he said with this vague look as though suddenly something had happened to him. "But," he said, "I have no place to build it." And I said, "Well, I have a place over here where you could build it." I said, "Would you like to come and build me a table in the warehouse here?" I said, "Come with me and you can look at it." So, you know, in those days, people weren't afraid of each other the way they are now. I wasn't anymore afraid of that man than the man in the moon. I just thought here was somebody, you know, in trouble. Nowadays, I suppose, we'd all be scared to death to walk up to a total stranger and take him into a warehouse. You know you['d] expect to be hit over the head.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: But there wasn't that feeling then; you didn't expect any violence. You didn't think of such things. And yet the poverty was much greater than it is today. So anyway there we were in this warehouse and he said, "Well, yeah, maybe we can do something." Well I didn't have brains enough to know that I should have bought some lumber for him; I just assumed that he would buy the lumber and charge me for it. He couldn't do anything like that. And I finally realized that he had gone all over San Francisco 'til he found a vacant lot that had an old gangplank abandoned by the Post Office when they gave up horses. He took his little son's coaster and dragged that heavy thing all the way across town to the warehouse. Took it all apart and just caressed these boards until they came out as smooth and as lovely as they are.

Jarrell: It's all joined ... it's beautiful.

Wyckoff: Yes. And it's put together with carriage bolts. It's just a gorgeous thing. Well, that was a revelation to me of just tenacity of purpose in a man. It was just a

marvelous thing. So from time to time I asked him to build more things. And we scraped together enough money to pay him a little bit for these things.

Jarrell: There was nothing in your studio ...

Wyckoff: No, there was nothing, so this was great. So gradually he began to build quite a few things. Then one fine day he had a great party in which he exhibited all his beautiful pieces of furniture. And he still does it to this day. He makes these gorgeous things.

Jarrell: What is his name?

The San Francisco Theater Union

Wyckoff: His name is George Bratt. Well, the whole thing took a very different turn when he said, "Do you know that it's a shame to waste this great space here, this warehouse." And he said, "I'm doing my carpenter work here, but," he said, "I'm really not a carpenter at all." "Well," I said, "what are you?" "Well," he said, "actually I'm an actor. I left the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York and came out here." He said, "I was disgusted with the corruption of the art of the theater and I decided to abandon it. But," he said, "maybe if we had our own place, we could do something." Well he was one of these people who was smitten with the desire for the "pure" theater as a pure art as he thought of it.

Jarrell: Politicized?

Wyckoff: Well, of course. So I said, "Well, what is it, what do you have in mind?" ... being a blank slate you could write on.

Jarrell: (Laughter)

Wyckoff: "Well," he said, "I think we should put on some revolutionary drama." "Well,": I said, "what kind?" I said, "Do you mean Ibsen ... is this what you're talking about? Bernard Shaw ..." You know, that was the extent of my repertoire. "No," he said, "I think we've got to come to grips with things more than that." So I said, "Well, where are you going to get the actors?" And he said, "Right out of that breadline; we need real people." So this was our first play and the rehearsals were all done in 1935; June 22, 1935, that was the first one.

Jarrell: I'll read from the Theater Union program: title, "Peace on Earth." Joint Marine Committee, Modesto Defense Fund. Stop Munitions Shipments. Souvenir Program. Dance and Entertainment. California Hall. Saturday, June 22, 1935.

Wyckoff: Here are the ads. You can have Xeroxes of those that were in some of those programs.

Jarrell: The San Francisco Theater Union Production. Now you were a member of this.

Wyckoff: Oh yes.

Jarrell: Did you act too?

Wyckoff: I was the secretary; I never acted in any plays. I was the legman ... the maid of all work. I was the one who had to dig up the funds. I did some of the stage sets. I was interested in stage sets primarily because in college I had worked with Sam Hume on a number of plays. I really was interested in drama. And I just enjoyed thoroughly this idea of doing things ... now here's The Black Pit which was another play. These were all just pure propaganda.

Jarrell: There's a notice on the back [of the program] here ... the advertising on the back reads: "The Voice of the Federation" ... then it lists all the maritime unions.

Wyckoff: All of them, yes. My job in connection with the formation of the Theater Union was to pull together an advisory board which consisted of people who were willing to maybe put up five dollars or give us a kind word, sell some tickets, or do something to encourage us. We were modeled on the New York Theater Union Plan. [Now here are some of] the people I asked to serve on the Board: Professor George P. Adams, professor of philosophy at the University of California; Mr. Albert Bender who was an art enthusiast and a great collector of beautiful, artistic things, and who was the kind of man who loved any kind of artistic enterprise in which there was some initiative, creativity, originality ... this kind of thing. He wasn't afraid in other words to try something new even though it might be propaganda. Professor James R. Caldwell ... now he was Sarah Bard Field's and Colonel Erskine Scott Wood's son-in-law; he was a professor of English at the University of California, a wonderful man.

Jarrell: Did you go and round these people up yourself?

Wyckoff: Yes, yes. I personally went and called on them. Professor James M. Kline, from the University; Reverend Horton Golbert ... he was, I think, with the Methodist Church; Mrs. Barkley C. Crum, Gertrude Crum, was an old school friend of mine, married to Bartley C. Crum, a lawyer, who was in partnership with John Francis Neylan. And John Francis Neylan, as you know, was the prime Hearst lawyer in San Francisco.

I had done a portrait of Gertrude. She and I were pretty good friends. And it is one of the best portraits I ever

made. And it's in New York on her mantelpiece now. Anyway, she stuck with us through this even though I know it was awfully difficult for her because the Hearst papers just took out after us as propagandists. They called us paid tools of the Reds.

Jarrell: But why should they even review you? I mean today if you look at what gets reviewed, anything as radical and avante garde as what you were attempting to do ... they wouldn't send anyone around.

Wyckoff: Oh, well they made headlines out of us.

Jarrell: Really?

Wyckoff: Yes. They were out to stamp us out. We were the enemy. We were the ones to be erased and hounded out of town. And examined. And we were, of course, either standing our ground firmly or fighting back in whatever little ways that we could. And usually, of course it was done with the propaganda tools that we had, such as that poster. The organizations of people that wanted to support this ... the unions and ... you see the program; the kind of people that backed us.

Jarrell: Right. The Maritime Unions, various labor groups.

Wyckoff: Yes. Maritime Unions and some of the other unions. But not the very conservative unions.

Jarrell: No.

Wyckoff: They didn't want anything to do with it. I don't think we ever had any railroad unions at all. Professor Willard -- he was an old professor of mine 'cause I took a great many English courses. And Reverend Alfred Fisk ... he was considered very pink. Mrs. Warren Gregory -- she was the wife of a lawyer and the mother of a lawyer and a very conservative lady who believed in free speech. She stood her ground. Even though I think she disagreed with everything we did, she decided that we had the right to do it. And she was strong in that respect.

Now Charles Hogan was with the Meiklejohn School and one of their professors in the San Francisco School for Social Studies. He later became the executive director of the United Nations Unesco Western Hemisphere and in an important position there. He was a person with great philosophical strength. Mrs. John Galen Howard [who supported us was] the wife of the architect who designed Wheeler Hall and the Campanile. She was a very close family friend, and [her] sons were all fairly progressive in their political ideas. Reverend A. Edgar Lowther ... he was, I think a Methodist. Reverend Edwin L. Parsons was the Episcopal Bishop; later he

became the bishop; [at the time] he wasn't, I think. Professor Max Radin. As you know he was the one who put on a great many plays ... he was actually a law professor but he put on a great many plays at the Greek Theater and was really interested in the theater, much more than he was in the law, I think.

Jarrell: Now when you initially started out this Theater Union ... you got together with this so-called carpenter who turned out to be a radical, a purist, an actor ...

Wyckoff: Well, he was a good dramatic director and that was the main thing.

Jarrell: Now, why did you go and seek out these people who to me seem to be more like liberal intellectuals, very established types, certainly sympathetic, socially-aware people ... why did you feel it was necessary to sort of legitimize the Theater Union to have such a Board of Directors? Today, for instance, if you take the San Francisco Mime Troupe which would be a comparable organization in terms of being socially activist, they wouldn't find it necessary to have a board of directors or an advisory committee or some more stable, more traditional group of people in the background ... yet you saw it was necessary. You did this, right?

Wyckoff: Yes, I did it.

Jarrell: Why?

Wyckoff: Well, I felt that they needed to bridge across and reach these people; that without this kind of backing, they would just evaporate...

Jarrell: Flounder.

Wyckoff: ... and might have a couple of shows and then it just would all come to nothing. These people were permanent people in a sense. They, they were not as transient ...

Jarrell: Well they were certainly established.

Wyckoff: They were the establishment in a sense ...

Jarrell: Right, but, Florence ...

Wyckoff: ... but not the ... they were, as you say, they were the liberal establishment, you might say.

Jarrell: ... I don't like to interpret, but I see the fact that you even went about it in this way, as a significant example of your modus operandi ...

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: ... of things that are going to happen later.

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: Just from what I've picked up in researching you. That here you've involved with these very radical people, maybe some communists, all different political types, and you were going about it in a very organized, practical way, trying to build bridges, so that your Theater Union doesn't end up with an audience of ten people and then dissolve. You were trying to make it viable with this kind of establishment organization behind it. Do you think that's an accurate characterization?

Wyckoff: Yes. I think we were trying to reach out into the total community and to get a message across to the whole community ... not just talking to ourselves which is so easy to do.

Jarrell: That's right.

Wyckoff: Yes. People love to just talk to those who agree with them. And these people didn't agree, but they seemed to feel that what we were trying to do was a healthy thing. That was what was important I think. They were willing to stand back of us ... in some very difficult situations.

Jarrell: What would you say was the life-span of the Theater Union? From what year to what year? Roughly?

Wyckoff: Hmm. Well, I think it started off with "Peace on Earth" in June, 1935. And I think it lasted about five years. The last play that I had anything to do with ... and after all, the thing was on its own feet so that it could go wherever it wanted. It had a board of directors, not [the supporting] advisory board, but a kind of operating committee of the people who were actually working in the Theater like George Bratt and ...

Jarrell: The people who oversaw the mechanics of putting on these plays?

Wyckoff: Yes, it did. The existing company were members of that; that was a different thing from the other supporting people. I don't think this [latter] advisory group ever met. We could turn to them individually for an expression of opinion, or we could get money if we needed it. They would help us get entré to a town or a neighborhood, or a theater wherever we needed to go, or felt we should go, that sort of thing. Anyway ... I don't know that they were anything more than just kind of a backlog ... well, that's all I was too, really. Because I wasn't acting in it and I

wasn't directing the plays, I was just sort of fostering it, you might say. I tried to enable it. Do you know what I mean?

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: I was a facilitator more than anything else.

Jarrell: It says here on the program: Public Relations, Florence Wyckoff.

Wyckoff: Yes. That was the kind of thing. That's all. I was the one that went down and bailed them out of jail and did things like that.

Jarrell: Would you like to talk about the repertoire?

John Steinbeck: Of Mice and Men

Wyckoff: Waiting for Lefty, The Black Pit, and then the last play ... the most interesting one was Of Mice and Men [by John Steinbeck].

One day in the warehouse, in walked John Steinbeck and he said, "I've written a book; it's a novel, and I don't know how to write a play, and I want to transpose it, and make it into a play. I don't want anybody else to do it for me; I want to do it myself. I want you to help me do it by walking through the lines, acting it out in front of me, and letting me listen so that I can gauge the tempo of the thing ... get the music of it and see whether it's going to be a play or whether it's some mechanical monstrosity. I want to do it myself. Are you willing to try?"

Well ... mind you, nobody was paid for any of this [work]. [It was all] volunteer, all of it. [The] people [in the Theater Union] [included some who] were working; some of them were unemployed, but those who worked had to come in after work. We always had to do this at night, because it was after work. Anyway, they were willing to do the transposing of the play Of Mice and Men from a book, a novel, into, into a play. And it took, I don't know how many weeks ... weeks and weeks. Night after night. Rewriting, redoing ...

Jarrell: He would be sitting there?

Wyckoff: He would be sitting there, listening to this whole thing. Finally we got it into shape, as a perfectly beautiful play. George really put his best into it. Warren Hagee was another man who really did a lot. He was an acutely sensitive person who was just a natural in the theater. He did the sets. He finally wound up doing some of the directing. Warren Hagee [had been] a group worker at

the Booker T. Washington Settlement House, a negro settlement house, and he wasn't a negro; he seemed to be their mainstay for a long time, sort of held it together.

Anyway, we opened the play Of Mice and Men at the Green Street Theater. See, [the way we operated was] we would rent a theater and put [on a play]. We would sell the tickets for enough money to pay for the rent and the cost of the utilities. We always had to pay for a stagehand to lie under the stage and do nothing in order to keep the union from picketing us. That was another annoyance. But we did that. And the musicians union ... I think we had to do the same thing with them. But ... and as you notice, we have union bugs all over everything ... always you have to have that.

Jarrell: That's right.

Wyckoff: So there were things we had to pay for, and we sold the tickets for that purpose. But the actors and actresses never got anything. Oh ... they might get a bag of doughnuts once in a while and a cup of coffee, but that was about it.

Well, the play turned out to get really good reviews and it became a great success and was running to full houses. Everything was going along well. We were thinking at last we're on the road to success. We're now rolling the way the Theater Guild in New York and the Theater Union in New York did. This is really it. One day we went down to the theater to go to work and there was a padlock on the theater; it was locked up and we couldn't get in. We didn't know what in the world had happened. Finally we called Steinbeck. It turned out that he had sold the play to these Broadway producers ...

Jarrell: Right out from under you.

Wyckoff: Yes. To Kaufman and Connally. He had sold it ... and had not even bothered to warn us of it. We were just amateurs -- a "little theater." Well, we really didn't feel very happy about that.

The reason I have wanted to go back and forth within the '30's as I talk is that there's a relationship of cause and effect between a lot of these things and I have to carry this right through on each one in order to make sense out of it.

For instance, somehow I put Peter Victor's name down [on my own research list] because I guess he was an interesting bridge across a lot of things.

Peter Victor was a fraternity brother of my brother's at the University of California at Berkeley. His father was a drayman on the waterfront. He joined a fraternity which was composed of I would say ninety percent the sons of wealthy families. For them Peter Victor was their great adventurer, their romantic character, the person who opened horizons to them, and made them see something beyond the humdrum life of the bond salesman and the career that they thought they were going to have to go into. Peter Victor was not the only one ... there was another young man named Strom who was a sailor, I think. Both of these men had been raised on the waterfront and knew the San Francisco waterfront. They had both shipped out and were a little bit older than the other boys and were regarded as a great entré to a world they knew nothing about, nothing.

I'm afraid that perhaps I had the same feeling. I had been living the life of a protected little girl in a society where little girls were supposed to move in carefully selected circles. Girls weren't supposed to branch out and find out about how the other half lives. But the Depression broke down a lot of these social barriers that had been built up. [It] just made people look around themselves to see well, what is really going on in this world? Well, when I married, and went to [live in] San Francisco and the big trouble on the waterfront began, all of us were curious [about] what in the world [was] happening. When the 1934 strike came, the General Strike, this was the kind of thing that really made your eyes fly open. You saw the behavior of big business leaders when they were afraid and it was a shocking thing to see how brainless and idiotic they became. [Now] Peter Victor was very much like a member of our family; he was a close friend of my brother's and he was younger than I. My brother is, you know, the youngest in the family. He [Peter] was just in our house all the time. He was there very often.

Jarrell: What did he do for a living?

Wyckoff: He was a drayman like his father. Originally they owned horses; those great wonderful Percheron horses that pulled beer wagons up and down the cobblestoned streets of the waterfront. Then, of course, they got trucks. Peter Victor did that his whole life. He followed in his father's footsteps, inherited his father's company and stayed on the waterfront. He had an older brother named Lee who was in my class, [but] I was never very close to Lee. Lee was a newspaper man, I think, or did something of this sort. Anyway, he didn't have the flair that Peter Victor had.

So ... came the day of the 1934 [General] Strike and we were all trying to find out "what's the meaning of all this?" Well, "who did you know on the waterfront?" Well about the only one I knew was Peter Victor. Anyway, it was about this

time that I was in the warehouse with George Bratt and all of this was going on, you know. We were trying to pull together the Theater Union. And of course the plays. They wanted characters who were actually [in real life] the parts that were called for; you got a longshoreman to play the part of a longshoreman, in other words.

Well how are you going to find a longshoreman? You had to know somebody on the waterfront who could enlist a longshoreman. And someone who also knew what you were trying to do in the theater. Well Peter Victor was the kind of person who could bridge across between the people who wrote the plays and directed the plays and the people who were being described in the plays.

Jarrell: Now ... question. [There are many ads for maritime unions] in a lot of those old theater programs. Now how did you go and get all of the different maritime unions to take ads in these programs? I mean, did you go around and do it personally? Or did they just hear about you? I'm just sort of interested in the mechanics of that. The Masters, Mates, and Pilots, the Sailors Union of the Pacific ...

Wyckoff: I think I did some of it. I used to go to the different offices and explain what we were doing. They felt we were terribly silly; that there was something very comical about it. I know they thought it was very humorous. But it gave them a certain amount of publicity and they saw that, you know, they could go along with it, so they did. Anyway, Peter Victor was an entré ... if I was scared to go alone to someplace, I could always get Peter Victor to go with me, this kind of thing. He was that friendly and willing and he didn't want to see me get in trouble either, so he could help. Captain Arvid T. Peterson, a patrolman for the Masters, Mates, and Pilots, known as Cappie Pete, was the same way. He was another one who would help me when I just went in where nobody should go, you know, and I didn't have sense enough not to go, so ...

Jarrell: And you had to go anyway ...

Wyckoff: I had to go anyway, so I would drag one of them along, or they would go with me. And so, we got these things done. Well ... ah ... that was a rather interesting class in Berkeley, and they kept in touch with each other pretty well throughout the years. And through Peter Victor some of his classmates were drawn into the Theater Union and played some of the really outstanding parts. Wellman Farley played the part of Lennie in Of Mice and Men. He was simply a stage carpenter for a long time, the son of a professor at the University or something of this sort, and was not a waterfront person at all. But he was Lennie, he just was Lennie. He was that kind of person who acted very simple

and slow; very low key and deliberate. He was cast perfectly and somehow he understood the part enough to be able to play it the way it should be. Well ... the waterfront '34 strike was a thing that just was kind of a high point in the '30's and everything sort of flowed from that. And it wasn't only in the waterfront people, it was a whole city. The whole city remembered it and it was a sort of paroxysm that occurred in which all of a sudden everybody began to see their relation to each other. I think it had a profound effect on the labor movement.

Jarrell: From your vantage point, now I know you haven't gotten mired in ideological strains ...

Wyckoff: No.

Jarrell: ... and of course you must have been aware of all the ideological conflicts within the labor movement.

Wyckoff: Oh yes, vaguely.

YWCA Industrial Department

Jarrell: Where were you during the 1934 Strike ... what were you doing, whom did you talk to about it, and did you participate in strike activities?

Wyckoff: Well, I did have some very steady influences in some ways. As I told you, I was on the Board [of Directors] of the Industrial Department of the YWCA. Now in those days, the YWCA hired a very competent staff person, so that the Board didn't flounder around. They got some real guidance and some real facts to work on. Brownie Lee Jones was the staff person. She was a person who had been trained to be a really top-notch, group dynamics kind of person. She'd been trained in worker's education back East ... she'd gone, I think, to Brookwood College which was the place where they trained union organizers and she really knew something about workers' education and the labor movement and the history of it and the significance of women's role at that moment in the labor movement which was just beginning to emerge. I mean this was 1934 after all; the women only got the vote in 1917 ... they were just beginning to come along in the labor movement.

Jarrell: Right.

Wyckoff: So [we had] the real guidance I would say of Brownie Lee Jones and the sympathetic backing of the General Secretary of the YWCA Mary Cady who was a very good, solid person. She was like Jane Addams of Hull House, that kind of person. Also the YWCA presidents were memorable; although you might have thought they would be very reactionary, they weren't. Because they were just good

human beings who had been given enough facts to realize that they had a role to play there that was more than just their own personal self-interest. They rose above that. I think the General Strike in San Francisco sharpened the vision of quite a few people. Well I knew Mrs. Wright, who was President of the Board, and it took a strong person to stand her ground. [You see, we] had a newspaper ... [in San Francisco] the Hearst paper, which would call the YWCA a bunch of Reds if they did the least thing that was sympathetic to labor; they'd get it in the neck. You had to have a strong board chairman who would stand up and know the reasons why they were doing these things, and back you up. So Mrs. Wright was a voice and a thoughtful person. Well, Brownie Lee interpreted these events to us, such as the strikes, and she brought in women like Jennie Malyas ... now do you know who Jennie Malyas is?

Jarrell: No.

Wyckoff: Well, Jennie Malyas was David Dubinsky's organizer in San Francisco. She was a great friend of John L. Lewis, too. She was the head of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union ... that is, she was the top executive in San Francisco.

Jarrell: On the West Coast?

Wyckoff: In San Francisco. I don't think there was anything except San Francisco then. Jennie was, of course, in the old-line socialist tradition of the garment workers. They're very different from the kinds of political philosophy that are on the waterfront, you know.

Jarrell: Certainly.

Wyckoff: Totally different. And yet, they were all loyal enough to each other to all go out together if there was a general strike, you know, this kind of thing. They had a parade up Market Street you wouldn't believe. That was something. I'll never forget it. Just amazing.

Jarrell: Did you walk in it?

Wyckoff: No. I stood in the sidelines with my mouth open, watching it all. [But no] I hadn't got that deeply identified with anything then.

Jarrell: You were learning.

Wyckoff: Well, I was observing an awful lot. Life had changed tremendously moving from Berkeley over to San Francisco to this. In San Francisco I was a little social flibbertigibbet.

I gave an exhibit at the museum of the Legion of Honor once and I went down to see Bob Holliday, head of the [San Francisco] Call-Bulletin. I said, "Now I'm going to have this exhibit and I want to put Ludwig Grossman's paintings in it, too. And I want to explain the whole background to you." He was a publisher at the Call-Bulletin and he was a very, well, very social type. While I was there, the phone rang, or a teletype thing he had, came through. There was a message and he took it down and I saw his face turn white. He turned to me and said, "Do you know what that was? They're going to close all the banks in America tomorrow because there's going to be a great bank holiday." "Well," I said, "that's simply terrific. Thank you so much." We were going skiing that weekend. So I walked right over to my bank and drew out every penny I had in the bank which was about \$300.00. Then I went over to Elliot MacAllister, who was a dear friend; he was not president then, but he became president of the bank shortly afterwards. I said, "Elliot, I have a message for you. I have some news and I'm not going to tell you where I got it, but your bank is going to be closed tomorrow, so you'd better be prepared." He said, "You're kidding." I said, "No, you'll see." And I turned around and walked out. The bank was closed the next day. From then on till the day he died, he used to say to me, "How is my bank? Is it going to stay open?" So you can see that I lived in two worlds.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: Our home was a grand central station of people from [all over]; we had a great variety of friends from many circles, such as lawyers, artists, actors, academicians and labor leaders. They all mixed at our home. The first time I brought Cappie Pete [Arvid T. Peterson] up [to the house] I'll never forget. Hubert was always afraid to death of some of my friends. He was a very conservative type as far as social things go. He belongs to clubs where he can be very, sort of protected. He doesn't branch out; he's not adventurous at all. So I brought Cappie Pete up to the house. Well, you should have seen Cappie in those days. He wore his cap way over on one side and he had a very blustery air. And he ...

Jarrell: Tell me, how old was he? And what did he do then? Was he retired?

Wyckoff: I think he was a patrolman for the Masters, Mates, and Pilots Union. So I said, "Hubert, I want you to meet Captain Peterson. He is now helping me with the Theater Union." And he was. I said, "He's the man that fixes all the electricity in the warehouse; he's the one that does all the chores of this and that and runs around." Oh, he helped with a lot of ads. He ran Upton Sinclair's little newspaper in the town, too, during the EPIC (End Poverty in

California] campaign. He had that old Wobbly love of slogans. Hubert took one look at him and said, "Where's the gin." Then he made an enormous martini which sort of helped him to overcome these dreadful moments. After Cappie left, I remember Hubert said to me, "Where did you pick up that Powell Street cowboy?"

Jarrell: Oh, that's beautiful.

Wyckoff: "Well," I said, "you must remember that we want to have people who are part of the scene in this play. You know we don't want to just have prominent club men from the Family Club in it; it's got to be something real." Well, of course later, he simply fell in love with Cappie.

Jarrell: I can tell that.

Wyckoff: There never were two friends so close. But he resisted him at first. Well, it's been my role to drag people into the house and get him over the hurdle of his first shyness which is tremendous. He's very cautious. So the whole world came into our little tiny apartment which we always had jammed full. Cappie was the patrolman for the SUP [Sailors Union of the Pacific] and the Masters, Mates, and Pilots [Union] both.

Jarrell: At that time? 1935?

Wyckoff: At that time. For a number of years, he would go on any new ship that came in ... he would take our old dog, Adolph, a dachshund, who I couldn't have with me. But Cappie would have him in his car ... and the two of them would go up the gangplank together, and go right directly to the galley, and they'd have a cup of coffee and a doughnut. And then the dog got too fat from eating doughnuts ... anyway, Cappie got fat, too. But his job was to try to find out if there had been any trouble between the officers and the men on the deck; any member of the Sailors Union and member of the Masters, Mates, and Pilots because they didn't want to have this get to the employer ... that there was any tensions. They would try to settle it.

Jarrell: Among themselves?

Wyckoff: Yes. He would mediate between those two unions to try to settle any beefs. Later he went to work for Hubert in Washington*, settling beefs.

Jarrell: That's right.

*Hubert C. Wyckoff, Jr., was Assistant Deputy Administrator for Maritime Labor Relations for the War Shipping Administration in Washington, D.C. during World War II.

Wyckoff: He was the head of the complaint and discipline section for War Shipping Administration. Before that he had been a Grace Line skipper for years. He came ashore when he had a heart attack at about age 40.

Jarrell: I see. So about how old was he when you met him?

Wyckoff: Gosh. Well, if you can figure out the difference ... he's 83 now. And I am 70; he's 13 years older than I. Cappie played in some of the shows and gave all kinds of enthusiastic support for the Theater Union. He was sympathetic to many of the things I was trying to do.

Labor and Workers' Education

Jarrell: Can we go back and discuss worker's education at greater length?

Wyckoff: Let's talk about workers' education and that background. Brownie Lee Jones as you know finally brought us all around to the notion that there was no proper workers' education movement on the West Coast and that one was desperately needed, so she and Annie Clo Watson got together. Annie Clo I think was one of the greatest social workers we ever had on the West Coast. She was the head of the International Institute whose job it was to take the newly arrived immigrants and get them acclimated to living here; helping them with their problems of everything -- language, [immigration] papers, trouble, family tensions, any kind of thing that occurred. Annie Clo also knew that these women, garment workers, and people of this sort were being so exploited. It was just awful what was happening to them. So she and Brownie and Jennie Malyas of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and Margaret Werth of the ... before there was an older woman whose name I can't remember, before that ... Bessie something ... of the Waitresses Union. And ... some of the other unions, Building Service Employees Union, Carpenter's Union, not too much Carpenter ... George Bratt was a member of the Carpenters Union.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: Anyway, they formed a committee to try to set up a training school for union members [to become] union officers.

Jarrell: They'd learn the basic procedures.

Wyckoff: Yes. The basic way of governing a union. How it should function in terms of arbitration, negotiation, keeping the books, making a contract, keeping the contracts; all the things that you have to do to make a union a functioning organization. Now there had to be somebody who

could teach this and [who] really knew how to do it and do it right. Henry Melnikow was a great resource. He came out to the West Coast where Henry and Greg Harrison started Hubert off in the field of arbitration. Greg Harrison for the employers and Henry Melnikow for the employees. That was the first chance Hubert had to do arbitration. Henry was a very close friend. He would come up to the house a lot. He was one who had of course a lot of connections on the waterfront. At that time Sam Kagel was with the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association.

Jarrell: MEBA. Yes.

Wyckoff: And I used to go to Sam often. He helped me get lots of ads on the waterfront. Sam was very friendly and helpful. But he was not with Henry then although I think he used Henry as a representative when they had arbitrations ... this sort of thing.

Pacific Coast Labor School

Well, we got the Pacific Coast Labor School started. Now, at that time there really was an awful lot of tension politically between all these different little factions in the labor movement. We really had to rise above all that. One way to rise above it was to have an objective base on which to put this. My father helped in giving his backing as a University Extension Director. And old John Kerchen of the AFL who really was one of the early workers' education people. It was AFL only; the CIO didn't exist then. I know it was remarkable later on when we finally got a CIO person to attend the school. Anyway, John Kerchen managed to get a little financial backing from the AFL. Then we got the people from down south who were already doing this same kind of thing in Los Angeles, trying to work out down there in the State Department of Education.

Jarrell: What year are we talking about now? When did you start getting together to discuss an organization which could confront workers' education, social problems, the nuts and bolts of running a union?

Wyckoff: Well, eight years before, I think it was '32 or '33 that the first little groups started.

Jarrell: So what was later called the Pacific Coast School of Labor emerged from these first small groups?

Wyckoff: Yes. First it was called the Pacific Coast Summer School for Workers; then it became -- as we got more and more sponsors -- at first it was just nothing but the YWCA. And a few ... really the International Institute and the YWCA and the Pacific School of Religion.

Jarrell: Then the Pacific School of Religion was involved very early on?

Wyckoff: Yes. They gave the grounds; the campus ... you see.

Jarrell: What was Henry Melnikow's role in this ... could you discuss that?

Wyckoff: Henry was the star professor in it. He taught. There's where I learned for the first time teaching methods that would make people think. He never lectured at all. He would divide the class up into two groups and he said, "Now this is a class in mediation; you are the employers, you are the employees and this is a garment workers situation," and then he would describe it. He'd tell them to start bargaining. What is it you need and what is it that you need and so on. So they had to think every minute and for people who are almost illiterate this was the most wonderful teaching method and experience in learning. Henry had learned this in Hull House. He came from Chicago. He was part of that remarkable group of people Jane Addams included who were dealing with people who were totally illiterate, but who had plenty of brain and could think. How do you work with them; how do you do all these things? They don't have to read and write in order to learn how to operate. So Henry had some enormous respect for the students and he never belittled them; he never looked down on them. He was a remarkable man.

Jarrell: Would you characterize him by saying that he went back a generation to the whole progressive and social reform movement of the early 20th century? Would you agree with that?

Wyckoff: Yes. He ... I would say that he was a product of the John R. Commons school, that [tradition].

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: Henry, though, was a Jewish immigrant who came from a very oppressed and persecuted group. [He] had the idea that this was a marvelous land to live in; that it was just a wonderful place, even though there were a lot of hardships here and he wanted to make it better. But Henry had a background that was different from people like Jane Addams who came from a different world. He did know some of the really, very exciting, stimulating people in Chicago. I think Chicago probably was the most exciting place in America for a long, long time. It's where the real leaven was in this country. And out here in San Francisco, we were feeling some of that when people like Henry came and helped us. So ... Henry was a great addition to the community.

We had some other faculty ... there was George Kidner. And he wasn't very inspiring. He just lectured like a straight, careful academic fellow. We had Bill Hopkins who was from Stanford and he was a little better. He was a professor of economics and he more nearly caught on to Henry's ways of teaching. They were very influenced by Henry and realized that they could not use the kind of teaching methods you use with new little kids who come through the regular school system all the way up to college. These were people who maybe [had gone no further than] sixth grade or something like that, so you [were] dealing with a different group.

On the other hand, I think that they were all sort of bound together ... there was a great deal of interaction among [students and] the faculty all during the summer ... they were close. We all ate together; we all played together; and everything was together, so it was a pretty close group. The student body was only about 50, maybe. There were a lot of University students who tried to get into the school but we had to put a ceiling on that and keep them in proportion because they would have run away with the whole thing. It was one of these things that had great charm, great romance; [people were curious] ... what's that great adventure going on over there. So we tried several ways of [seeing that non-labor people could attend;] it was perhaps a little unfair but we made it so that college students who wanted to go had to raise a scholarship for someone from the labor group in order to go. That helped some to balance the representation. It meant you had to either pay twice or you had to go out and raise a scholarship [so] this helped to keep the thing in proportion. [But] finally we just clamped the lid on and said that there could not be more than, I think it was thirty percent [of the student body who were non-labor people]. Of course many college students wanted to get this training in order to be the employer representative to deal with the labor representative. And I'm sorry now, in a way, that we were quite so stuffy about it, because the University needed a better way of training people like that. And they didn't have it. Not until much later when Clark Kerr started their Institute of Industrial Relations did they begin to really think about it.

Jarrell: That was after the war.

Wyckoff: Yes. So in a sense I think that we might have had a little more sympathy for those who were trying to do it then. I don't think we realized how lacking the University was in that field at the time.

Jarrell: Just one other point about the school. I have not read through all of these year books, but would you say that these were ideological theses conveyed to the students? I know that there was a practical aspect to the education in terms of just the mechanics of operating a union or thinking

in this new way. But in an economics course that was being taught, would the instructor hew to a specific line, like a socialist line, or an economic interpretation that would focus around a class struggle?

Wyckoff: Well, I think they were taught mainly to analyze all the different approaches there were. So that you learned this is the communist line; this is the socialist line; this is the Otis line; this is the Chandler line; whatever, you know ... you got all these different views so that you could recognize them when they came up in your union.

Jarrell: And deal with them without being doctrinaire?

Wyckoff: Yes. It was not doctrinaire.

On the other hand, there was another school, that we were always being confused with which claimed that it was very pure. We claimed that that was a school that was heavily influenced by the communists; therefore we wouldn't have any part of it. At that time there were these legislative committees that were investigating communism all the time. Professor George Hedley, who was director of the school, was always having to go and defend the school and say that we were not communists. Because I really think that both of them were trying to do a job in terms of training people to operate a union. I can't say what the Tom Mooney School taught because I never went there. So I just don't know.

Jarrell: Right. Did you consider yourself at any point along the line here as a socialist? Once you got more involved and more caught up in these activities ... you must have had some vantage point, some personal perspective by which you analyzed and understood your activities?

Wyckoff: Well, I read a vast amount. Hubert was also very curious and read a huge amount. We read ... and the Meiklejohn School as I told you got us into reading these things. We had their professors as neighbors down below, living in the same building with us, two professors from the Meiklejohn School, who brought home every kind of book on Fabian Socialism, Capitalism, Marxism, all of the various little "isms" ... the Trotskyites, and all those little splinter groups. We got terribly tired of trying to analyze the difference between all of them, I know. But we didn't reject them all, you know; it was as though every one of them had something to contribute along the way. We were a little annoyed with the fanatics, I'll admit. But I would say that at no point ... I think I did vote for Norman Thomas once. I did that.

Jarrell: Yes, I'm just trying to pin you down somewhat, you know.

Wyckoff: But I don't think I ever registered as a member of the Socialist Party, or anything like that. I was always a registered Democrat as long as I know. I scandalized my mother by voting for Al Smith. She said, "Oh, I know you never did that." She wouldn't believe it. Well, politically we were aware of a lot of pulling and hauling.

Norma Perry

Wyckoff: Captain Peterson introduced us to Norma Perry. That's how we met her. She was an extraordinary woman. She seemed to be a very practical, union secretary who knew the kind of thing that the head of the union needed. She was an office manager for the main labor union executive secretary what you call the one that manages the union.

Jarrell: Did you know her when she worked at the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] with Harry Bridges or is this later, when she was with Harry Lundeberg of the SUP?

Wyckoff: Both. All unions that she ever worked for. And I think she worked for a lot of them. And I think I knew her first when she worked for Bridges and then when she was with Lundeberg. But she got herself in the absolute heart ...

Jarrell: Dead center, right.

Wyckoff: Dead center of the union and knew all of the gossip; she had the greatest underground knowledge of what was going on throughout the labor movement. Well, I found her an absolutely fascinating character. I used to get up early in the morning and go down and have breakfast with her.

Jarrell: Where?

Wyckoff: With Norma in some dump on the waterfront just to hear the gossip.

Jarrell: Well, when you met her, was she primarily already into the maritime unions?

Wyckoff: Yes.

Jarrell: ... or did she have a past history with some other unions?

Wyckoff: Not that I knew of. I heard about it from her. Because she would talk pretty generally about things.

Jarrell: Tell me about her. I've never read anything. I've just heard about her.

Wyckoff: Well, she was a small woman with stomach ulcers who lived on oatmeal mush. [She] had an absolute power complex beyond anything. It was just amazing. Well, by that I mean, she worked through other people. She wanted to be in the center; she wanted to be right where it was happening.

Jarrell: Do you know anything about her background? Where she came from?

Wyckoff: Well, I don't remember. I can describe her. She was a very warm personality, very able to fit into any group; in that respect she was very skillful. She could make herself, ingratiate herself into a group very easily. She was also I think quite dedicated in the sense that ... well, she had to earn a living, but she would live on very little. Money was not her goal. Her goal, obviously, was to be in the center of power. She made herself indispensable by being thoroughly competent at managing the business affairs of a union. That was how she did it. I know Cappie Pete had a lot of respect for her. As far as I know, he never had a falling out with her in any way. Cappie never liked Bridges. He never did. He really ... well, I'm afraid Cappie was a little prejudiced; he was an old Wobbly and I'd say a rather militant old socialist rather than ... and he never would buy the whole communist line. He just would not do it.

Jarrell: That authoritarian ...

Wyckoff: No, he would not do it. To him that was a big sellout.

Jarrell: I've heard many things both very disparaging and very wonderful about Norma Perry ... depending on if I'm talking to an old CIO person or if I'm talking to an old AFL type. She was quite a phenomenon. Everyone talks about her.

Wyckoff: Yes. Well, she was really quite a remarkable person. You don't often find a competent secretary at that level in a union, you know. Literate, able to correct all the papers, keep everything right, fill out the form right, know exactly how to deal with the government, know how to deal with this and that and the other.

Jarrell: With everybody.

Wyckoff: And with everybody. She was a remarkably efficient woman. She really was. And the way she got control of things was by making these men dependent on her. She just was such a help to them they couldn't live without her.

Jarrell: Doesn't that say so much though ... that if she'd been born in another time that maybe she would have been head of a union herself?

Wyckoff: Yes, she would. Well she could have been then. But she liked this better.

Jarrell: She liked the background ...

Wyckoff: She liked working with those particular groups I think. She liked the waterfront, she liked the kinds of things they did. I know that she steered clear of all women's groups. She was [wary of] the kind of backbiting and gossipy stuff that goes on in a women's union [which] is murder. They knife each other and do things that are just awful. She thought sailors and longshoremen were fine, you know. She could cope with them. But she just didn't care for the ... I know she was not a friend of Jenny's at all; they were not close. In fact Jenny regarded her as ... I think Jenny was very suspicious of her. Jenny's quite conservative though as the union group goes.

Jarrell: You used to go and have breakfast with Norma and listen to her. I mean, did you kind of idolize her in a certain way?

Wyckoff: No. I just felt that this was a great adventure in terms of learning ... I was learning. You know what I was doing ... I was really just going to school is what I was doing. When I got to San Francisco, it was a whole new world and I was just finding out everything I could about it. I guess if the truth were known, and you had to classify Norma, I think the nearest thing you could say perhaps was she was a Trotskyite. That's the nearest that I can go. But it isn't altogether that because she also had a great deal of sympathy for the old Wobblies. She was the kind of person that when things were really tough, she knew where all the soup kitchens were and she'd help people solve their most elemental problems of living. See there wasn't any public relief things in those days.

Jarrell: No. Just terrible.

Wyckoff: Things were awful ... the agony was terrible. And Norma was somebody who was helpful to all of them. She really loved those guys and did everything she could for them. I know that. And Cappie thought the world of her. He really did.

Jarrell: Really. I never knew about all these interconnections.

Wyckoff: Now let's see what happened ... he was the patrolman there for so long ... I think that ... you know

Cappie almost died. That's why he left the ship. He left the Grace Line because he had a massive heart attack and was put in the hospital. You know, that maritime hospital ...

Jarrell: In San Francisco?

Wyckoff: The Marine Hospital up there. He tells the story of how they pulled the sheet up over his face. And they said, "Well Cappie's dead. He's gone." And Dr. Pete Geyer, an old friend who was a doctor there, was walking down the hall and the nurse turned and said, "Well, Cappie Pete's dead."

Jarrell: Oh my God.

Wyckoff: But Cappie heard it. He said he couldn't move. He was just completely gone. He couldn't move, but he heard everything.

Pete Geyer turned to the nurse and said, "What?" And then he said, "That old son of a bitch? He's too mean to die." And with that he went in and took a great big needle with adrenalin or something and plunged it into Cappie Pete's heart. It started the heart going with a great shock and got him going. They understood this fluid balance business a little better up there than they did most places. And they pulled him through. So from that time on Cappie said, "I feel I'm living on borrowed time." And he's lived to be 83. And this was when he was 39 or 40 years old. He told me, "I was a two-bottle man." And he said, "A two-bottle man doesn't have long to live. So," he said, "I lived a whole life as a two-bottle man ..."

Jarrell: Meaning an alcoholic?

Wyckoff: Yes. He was an alcoholic. He stopped completely and became a non-alcoholic. This is amazing because he didn't stop drinking, but he tapered way down ... he got interested in other things. He got interested in Upton Sinclair; he got interested in the Theater Union; and he got interested in this patrolman job which he enjoyed very much. Of course he loved Harry Lundeberg. He just loved Harry. He had more funny stories about Harry Lundeberg, you wouldn't believe. They're just marvelous. Someday you must tape him, except the poor fellow now has a speech impediment.

Jarrell: Doesn't he have Parkinson's now?

Wyckoff: He does.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: And he's on that L Dopa [medication] which has held it back, but his speech is very impaired. He cannot get the words out. He forgets words and has a hard time. I guess you couldn't get it from him now. Hubert remembers most of them though. You can get Hubert to tell a lot of them. He knows many good ones. I'm afraid that our evenings were spent regaling each other with great stories about sea-going days and all kinds of things like that. And of course Cappie could spin a yarn the likes of which would entertain the crew forever. That's the secret of being a good sailor, I think, is being able to tell a good yarn to keep everybody from being bored on long voyages. He could certainly do that. Well, he lived with us in Washington, D.C., you know. He came back there, and for about six months he lived with us. And then he got himself a place to live by himself. But he used to come back and live with us in between times whenever ...

Jarrell: Was he married?

Wyckoff: Yes, I guess so, but it didn't last very long; I think it was for a year or so.

Jarrell: He was a loner more, I guess.

Wyckoff: Yes, he was a loner. Anyway, after the war he came back and became Russell Wolden, the San Francisco tax assessor's, small boat assessor. They decided in City Hall that they were missing a lot of money because nobody knew where the small boats were. And they knew they needed somebody who knew how to find the small boats. Who better than Cappie! So they had Cappie. He was there till he retired.

Matthew Schmidt

Jarrell: Could you talk about your friendship with Matthew Schmidt?

Wyckoff: Well, why don't we have a try at him and see. We knew Schmitty after he got out of prison, when he became free on parole in 1939. Then his sentence was commuted in 1942 [by Governor Olson]. He [had] spent 23 years in San Quentin and 2 years in Los Angeles County jail ... so he was twenty-five years in prison altogether.

Now the Los Angeles Times was dynamited in 1910*, [RJ: It was October 1, 1910] around in there. Schmitty was arrested

*The bombing of the Los Angeles Times in which twenty men were killed and seventeen were injured during a series of protracted labor organizing struggles in the anti-union atmosphere of Los Angeles on October 1, 1910, is a landmark event in both California and national labor history. The court cases arising out of the conspiracy evidence in the bombing attracted national attention, and brought the American Federation of Labor, on the one hand, and the National Manufacturers'

in New York in 1915 with David Kaplan [of that dynamiting]. Here is the background story that I found among Schmitty's papers. Now I want to give you a brief rundown on these dates so that we can get the context of what we're talking about. [Tom] Mooney [had been] sent to prison in 1917 after a dynamiting of the PG&E during the Preparedness Day Parade in 1916 [July 22] in San Francisco.

Jarrell: Well, that's the Mooney-Billings case ...

Wyckoff: Yes. Well, he and Schmitty both became free in 1939 ... But getting back to Schmitty, we got to know him because he married [our neighbor and friend] Beth Livermore in 1947.

Jarrell: Now this article here is dated Sunday, February, 1915.

Wyckoff: Yes. Anton Johannsen who was the organizer of the California Building Trades from 1909-1914 was the real spearhead, money-raiser friend of the McNamara boys* and he raised money for Schmitty and David Kaplan [as well.] Now Lincoln Steffens moved into this whole thing [at the time] and tried to get Schmitty off by a deal in which the McNamara Brothers were to confess if the authorities would exonerate all the other people implicated. There had been many dynamitings all over the country [done] by the IWW's who were supposedly at the bottom. [General Harrison Gray] Otis of the [Los Angeles] Times was the man who wanted to stamp out these people. He especially wanted to exterminate a fellow named Tveitmoe who was a very famous labor leader in those days. He didn't particularly care about Schmitty and Kaplan. Otis wanted to get the ones at the back of it all. Lincoln Steffens sent that telegram.

Jarrell: Now I'd like to Xerox this paper. Where did you get this?

Wyckoff: In Schmitty's papers, you see.

Association, on the other, into bitter conflict. Ultimately the outcome of the case worked against the labor movement, and employers in Los Angeles were able to keep the city a stronghold of the open shop until the 1930s, and to discredit the rising socialist trend then sweeping the country.

In 1911 three suspects in the bombing, Ortie McManigal, James B. McNamara, and John J. McNamara (brothers), were brought to trial, accused of organizing the bombing. The McNamara brothers were sentenced, J.B. to life imprisonment, and J.J. to fifteen years, after they changed their pleas from not guilty to guilty. The plea change involved Matthew Schmidt, an anarchist convicted on conspiracy evidence arising out of the Times bombing case. The Wyckoff's friendship with Schmidt began after "Smitty's" sentence was commuted and he was released from San Quentin prison.

*McNamara brothers were James B., and John J. A third defendant was Ortie McManigal. Clarence Darrow was the defense attorney.

Jarrell: Oh. It's dated New York, February 18, 1915, to the Governor of California at Sacramento and to the District Attorney of Los Angeles County. Do you want me to read the text?

Wyckoff: Oh yes. Go ahead and read it in.

Jarrell:

"Permit me to protest any steps by you to extradite Matthew A. Schmidt from here on the ground that, in the settlement of the so-called McNamara case, the then district attorney made an agreement with the two McNamara brothers, one term of which was, that if the McNamaras would plead guilty and go to prison, the pursuit of Schmidt, Kaplan, and the others suspected of complicity, would be stopped so far as Los Angeles County was concerned. The McNamaras are keeping their part of this moral contract; Los Angeles County and California are morally bound to keep their part. [Signed] Lincoln Steffens."

Could you give the background of how Beth Livermore and Schmitty got together?

Wyckoff: Yes. Beth was the daughter of Mrs. Horatio Livermore. Now Horatio Livermore was the man who set up a lot of the power companies that supplied electricity to the Central Valley. He was a promoter and financial tycoon; he founded the town of Livermore and was a person of great wealth. There were [half-] brothers by another marriage who disapproved of Beth because she was a person of liberal philosophy and a very strong character. [When we knew her] she was a school attendance officer and she got to know [first hand] the poverty of the Depression. As a matter of fact, she brought home one little boy whom she had found living in a pipe in a vacant lot; she brought him into her home and really adopted him. He became a very close friend of ours. His name is Frank Fitzpatrick and he was a sailor; he is a sailor now. He's permanently at sea and is somebody who knew Schmitty; he could tell plenty of stories about Schmitty if you could ever locate him; he lives in Louisiana now and sails for the Lykes Line.

Anyway, Beth [had been] very interested in the Mooney case. She used to contribute money to the defense of Tom Mooney to try to help him. She had a friend who was also helping on cases of this sort who was, I think, a social worker, and her name was Katherine Schmidt. She was Schmitty's sister. Well, Katherine Schmidt became quite a close friend of Beth's.

The correspondence shows something that I didn't realize. [This was] that when we were in Washington during the war, Katherine Schmidt in [the] last years of her life came and

lived with Beth after Mrs. Livermore died. Katherine died there in Beth's home. On her death bed she said to Beth, "My brother is coming out of prison and after 25 years in prison, you have no idea of the terrible effect it has [had] on [him] ... on his [ability] to cope with the world. For 25 years he has not been allowed to make decisions or do things that normal people would do. He has to put on the clothes they give him; he has to eat the food they give him; he has to go out in the yard when they tell him to go. He has not had an opportunity to make any decisions, and it stultifies the mind. He had tried desperately to keep his mind alert and corresponded with a lot of people, he works in the machine shop there, and he does things of this sort, but," she said, "he's just like an innocent child coming out into the world and I want somebody to look after him. Will you do it?" Beth promised on Katherine's deathbed that she would do this. So Schmitty came out of prison. First he went back East to Wisconsin from where he had originally come, where he had family. I think he went back to his brother's home for a while. Then he went to Chicago ... Anton Johannsen was alive, the man who had raised the money for him; he was an old man, but he was alive, living in Chicago. He offered a job to Schmitty working on the Chicago Federation of Labor [news] paper back there. The paper owned a big radio station called WCFL or something. You can [read] the [newspaper] stories of Schmitty being given a job back there to try to make a living. Well, he evidently had a hard time coping with the world at large. Finally he came out to visit Beth and he and Beth got married in 1947. Now [Hubert and I] had just come back from [living in Washington, D.C.] after the war then. So that's when we first met Schmitty, as I recall it. I don't believe we knew Schmitty in '39 or '40. I just have no memory of knowing him before that marriage.

It was a profound influence in our lives because the whole entourage of people who worked hard to try to release those political prisoners .. [since that] is what they really were ... were friends of ours. We got to know them; we heard a great deal about the life of those people, the kind of things they did, the terrible struggle they had to get just treatment in the courts and in the newspapers and in the world at large.

We have some correspondence, some papers, the letters, that came to Schmitty from all over the world. When Beth died ... incidentally I have the tragic story [from the newspaper] of what happened. They were driving home from Big Sur where they had a beautiful little cottage down on the edge of the ocean ... and the sun blinded her and she drove over the cliff and fell, with Schmitty in the car, they fell all the way down this tremendous cliff and crashed in the ocean. And she died. He was taken to the hospital and survived. But he was so shaken up by her loss, that he

didn't live very long after that. I think he knew that he wasn't going to last very long, because he gave us all his papers. So we agreed to keep them, and put them in the right place; if we could find the right place for them.

He never did really find out what happened in that dynamiting case. He wanted me to help him get an entré to look at the papers that are in the Huntington Library that give the background of a number of those old Wobbly trials. He thought the clue lies there, somewhere. I was just ready to drive him down to Huntington Library and had made arrangements because they don't allow [just] anybody to go in. So I had just arranged to get some visiting permission for him to do down there when he died. So we missed out on that.

I think Schmitty's character is one of the most interesting things. He had such a profound influence within that [San Quentin] prison. He was such a strong man that he rose above the whole business of incarceration and became a kind of an inspiration to people over there. I have talked to people like, oh, Mr. Holohan, warden of San Quentin and Josephine Holohan his daughter. They said if all of the other prisoners were like him, they could have opened the doors of the prison and they wouldn't have had to have any guards at all. In fact, one day, they needed a piece of machinery very badly in order to set up a factory ... a jute mill or whatever they were doing. Schmitty said he could make this machinery if he could have a look at it and see what it looked like. There was a model of it over in Oakland. So they said, "All right. You go to Oakland." He put on civilian clothes, went alone over to Oakland, looked at the machine, and came back to the machine shop at San Quentin and made the machine for them ... which shows what an incredible relationship there was there ... he was really an extraordinary person. He was always very humorous when he was in a large crowd of people and someone would say, "Oh, there's a convict here. I want you to meet a man who's been in San Quentin." He would say, "Yes, I was in the old university for 25 years." Oh, what a thing. Yes, it's just incredible. And anytime people would look scared, he'd say. "Don't worry, I've been rehabilitated." So, he could joke about it, and it was ...

Jarrell: Did he feel bitter?

Wyckoff: No. He was, I think, the strongest character I ever knew.

Jarrell: It is hard to imagine what it means to take away half of a person's life and to know that ...

Wyckoff: Well, I think he had a feeling that this was done for a cause. This little thing he wrote when he went into

prison gives an idea of what he felt about going into prison.

"And if it should finally come to pass that I must live the remainder of my life behind prison walls, then I shall say, 'stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage'; [inaudible] innocent and [inaudible] take that as a heritage. I understand the despair and horror that haunt the poor victims of the rotten, industrial centers of the East, and I know the sacrifice made by their families and friends that they may bring their shattered lungs and wasted bodies to this land of balm and blossom only to find they must pay tribute to men who have capitalized their misfortunes. It was almost wholly from this class of vultures that I was compelled to select a jury. I feel very deeply the suffering of those who lost their relatives and friends in the times of disaster. And I feel this more keenly than do any of the men back of my prosecution. For I cannot rid my memory of such cases as Ludlow, Colorado, Lawrence, Bayonne, Coeur D'Alene, and hundreds of other places where the workers have been slaughtered by the vassals of capital."

So ... pretty strong.

He was picked up by the Burns Detective Agency.

Jarrell: Instead of the Pinkertons?

Wyckoff: Yes. That was the industrial spy of the time.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: Well, Schmitty and Beth and Hubert and I took trips to the mountains together. We loved each other's company and we had a lovely time together. We were a whole generation apart but somehow or other we felt close. We were neighbors, but that was not the only reason. We just felt close. They would invite us to their house and we would go and they would have friends, of all these very interesting groups. They had a great many friends in the Henry George Society. They had friends in little groups who were the old suffragettes. You see, you have to realize where they came from. Early day social workers; also there were a lot of literary people. Lincoln Steffens and Ella Winter were good friends of theirs, very close. Lincoln worked a great deal of his time to try to save those people. And [his wife] Ella Winter did too. His [Schmitty's] books and boxes are full of pictures of the families of those people.

He was not very close to Tom Mooney or [Warren] Billings. That was evidently a different group. But he had a very distinguished circle of friends. And they worshiped him.

They really thought of him as somebody really heroic. You could see that. He really was an extraordinary character. Far above the usual political prisoner who was a victim of a tough situation. This man rose above the whole thing. A marvelous guy.

Jarrell: He seems to have transcended the situation.

Wyckoff: Yes, he did. Another man who was equally remarkable was Anton Johannsen. And there's a lot about Anton. Big Bill Haywood was another very interesting one, too. I didn't know him of course, but I did know that he corresponded with him.

Jarrell: That Schmitty corresponded with him?

Wyckoff: Yes. When we went to Chicago, Hubert became arbitrator for the railroads there, and ...

Jarrell: When was this?

Wyckoff: Well, this is much later. But Schmitty opened the doors [for] us in Chicago. Molly Levitas was the secretary of the Central Labor Council of Chicago; she was the "Norma Perry" type secretary, that kind of person. She was the one who for thirty years knew where everything was, how everything worked, and was the secretary to the secretary of the Central Labor Council of all of Chicago; ... it was called the Chicago Federation of Labor. Molly took us under her wing and introduced us to everybody and his brother in Chicago in the labor movement. And so we really had a fascinating life in Chicago. And it never would have happened if it hadn't been for Schmitty.

Jarrell: Well, what year was this now?

Wyckoff: This was right after the war.

Jarrell: Before you came back here?

Wyckoff: No, just about that time, 1947-60. We kept our apartment in San Francisco as well as a home in Watsonville. We really had feet in both towns. We would go for one or two months a year to Chicago.

Jarrell: I see.

Wyckoff: Because his [Hubert's] work was really long. They'd give him a hundred arbitration cases [at a time.] And we'd go back there, and we lived in the Chicago north side right near Molly. Lillian Herstein was another one. Now these were nearly all what I would call ... oh, they're the old-line socialist types. And we just met everybody and

had a fascinating life. Schmitty was our entré, really. That's how we got started.

So Schmitty and Beth had a great influence in our lives. We were very fond of both of them. So that was part of the San Francisco scene during the '30s. And a really important thing that led into many paths and shaped our lives in many ways. That was my closest contact and gave me the best insight into the meaning of the labor movement. This is the kind of thing that books don't show; you've got to see it lived the way this was.

Farm Security Administration Camps

Wyckoff: During the time of the Pacific Coast Labor School, I was on the board. And I offered to go out into the Farm Security [Administration] camps to try to locate some young people who might come to the Pacific Coast Labor School as potential labor union organizers in agriculture.

In those days, there was so little [organizing], it was almost nothing. There had been some fiascoes, some strikes, some pitiful efforts that had failed. There was a lettuce strike. And there were various strikes that had really been agonizing affairs in which they were shot down with tear gas and all sorts of bad things had happened. The rural police had really given them a hard time. The March Inland*, all of that business that the longshoremen were trying to help with ... all was really ... the Modesto situation was an example of it. So I offered to go out and see if I could find some students who might be possible recipients of scholarships which had been raised and the unions gave scholarships too. I had friends in the Farm Security Administration. I haven't gone into that whole business of the Farm Security Administration (FSA), but I knew Jonathan Garst, Administrator of the Western Regional Office. I knew Fred Soule; I knew Dr. Omer Mills (staff people in FSA); I knew ... all the whole staff practically of the Farm Security Administration in San Francisco. And so they gave me letters of introduction.

Jarrell: What year would this have been?

Wyckoff: Probably around '36, I think.

Jarrell: Yes.

*The "March Inland," refers to the ambitious efforts of militant Pacific Coast maritime unions during the mid-1930s to organize the inland transportation and distribution industry in California (particularly in agriculture and warehousing). Most notable in these efforts was the pro-CIO International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), under the leadership of Harry Bridges, which sought to unionize the unorganized, rural, inland workers, linking them with the organized coastal unions, thereby increasing labor's bargaining power.

Wyckoff: Anyway, I went out to the different camps and it was awfully funny. Because of my limited knowledge of the culture I was getting into, which was pure Okie ... there were very few others, there were no negroes. There were just dust bowl Okies. These were the Joads; these were the people who had been plowed out and were coming out to California. Most of them went to the cotton-growing areas. Some went to Yuba City and the peach orchards.

The Farm Security camps were remarkable. I still think that the FSA was one of the great programs during the New Deal. The camps were of three levels of housing. They had the emergency shelter, which was just a square box with a faucet outside; then they had a better home that you could graduate to if you showed that you were a neat housekeeper and would care for the place; then they had a "labor home" with a garden which was a much more permanent thing. The idea was you were trying to help people to settle.

Jarrell: And to stabilize.

Wyckoff: Yes. Even though the great problem of employment, the seasonal work, was never faced by the camp itself.

Jarrell: You mean the nature of that cycle, the migration ...

Wyckoff: Yes, that's right. The fact that the sun moved and that there wasn't any work in the winter made it almost impossible to complete the settling process without assistance or other employment. Anyway they had to have a place for these people who were drifting in [to California] by the thousands from the dust bowl, you know. And they'd put them in these temporary shelters. In each camp there was a community center, a building in which people gathered and they had a kind of a tenant council, in which the people were really asked to set up their own rules and govern themselves and try to work as a group to help each other through things. The Okies were pretty good at it. They had their own ways, and their own fights, and their own prejudices; but they really did try to do things within the culture they felt that were important. I know that they would pass the hat and take up money to have an iron to iron clothes and make them look neat. This was very important. And what happened to that iron ... they called it 'the arn'. "Where's the arn? Who's got the arn?" I remember ... it was wonderful.

Jarrell: You know, we're almost at the end of our tape.

Wyckoff: Oh dear, oh dear. Well, anyway, I went around to these camps.

Jarrell: Just go on and keep talking.

Wyckoff: The last thing that happened was that this dear old lady said to me, "You all want my boy to go to your school. Is this a praying school? A praying school?" I had said that it was in Berkeley at the Pacific School of Religion.

Jarrell: Right. Oh.

Wyckoff: And they thought it was a praying school. And they wanted him to go to the praying school. They thought that would be a good thing to go to the praying school. The fact that it was a labor organizing school would have just completely turned their hair white. Well, we did get some remarkable young men, 18, 20 years old ... I remember one family, the Fullers from the Yuba-Sutter Labor Camp. What remarkable young people. They came to this school. And it was a real eye-opener to them that it was possible for their boys to go on and get a decent education. Instead of becoming labor organizers however, they went to San Luis Obispo Poly Tech and became successful farmers. And probably are employing migratory workers just like their parents during the dust bowl days.

Jarrell: Oh!

Wyckoff: However, it's true that many of those families became the big farmers of today.

Jarrell: Yes.

Wyckoff: They did. They were ambitious, determined people. And very serious about doing what they thought they should do here. I know Russell Giffen was one of them. And he borrowed \$35,000,000 to just plant one crop from Clayton Anderson. That's what happened to one Okie. And he's a self-made man. With that same feeling for being ... in the land of opportunity. You go up the ladder.

Jarrell: And especially the agricultural ladder, starting as a ...

Wyckoff: Yes, yes, yes. Well, these students that I managed to get were a great leaven in the school, you know. They were a totally different experience for the students who came from the building service employees and the garment working industries.

Jarrell: Right.

Wyckoff: This sort of thing. So there was a great advantage in having these youngsters from the fields ... course it was hard to get them, because summertime was when they were getting work. And the family had to give up the ... they had to give up the hands, the labor that brought in

their income ... so it was a great sacrifice [to let them go to school]. And we could not get very many. Because all we had to offer them was room and board. And the fee for their classes. And so it took great sacrifice on the part of those families to let them go.

Trans: Doris Johnson

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